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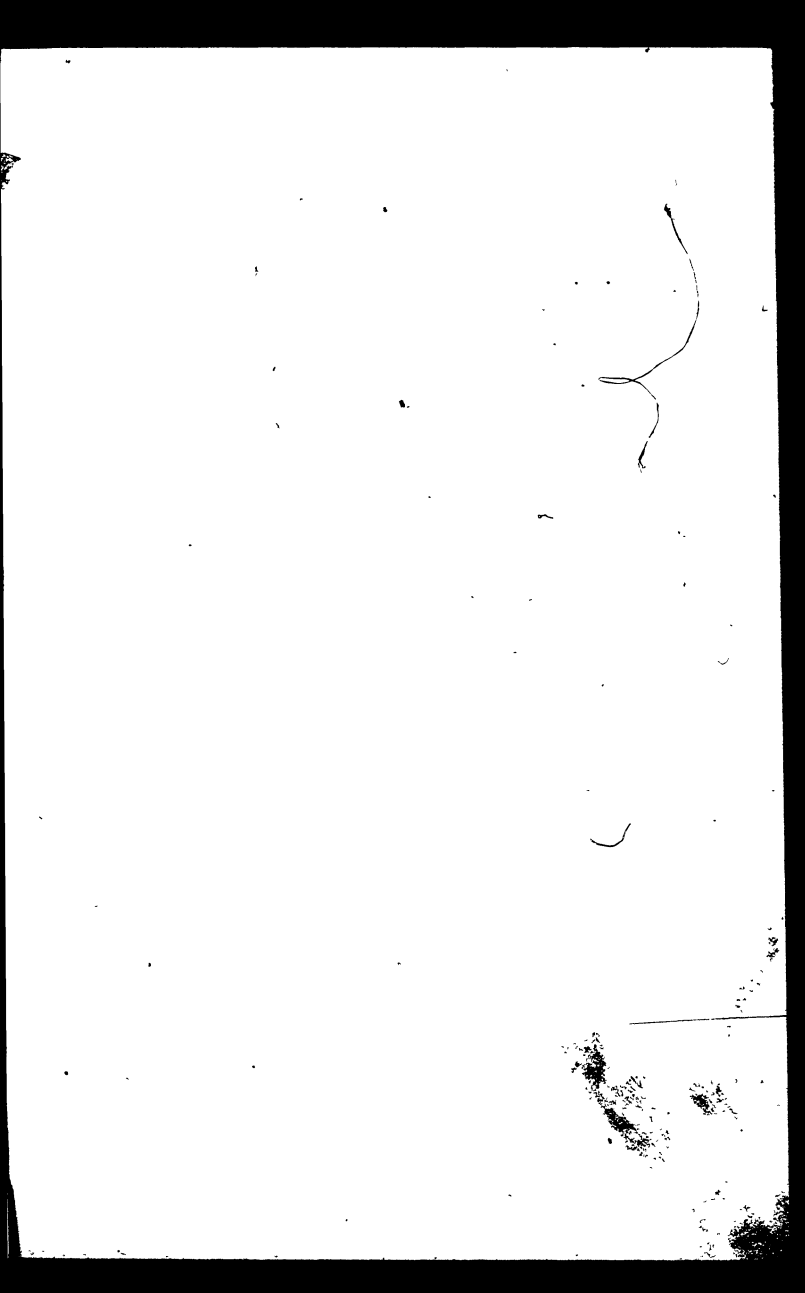
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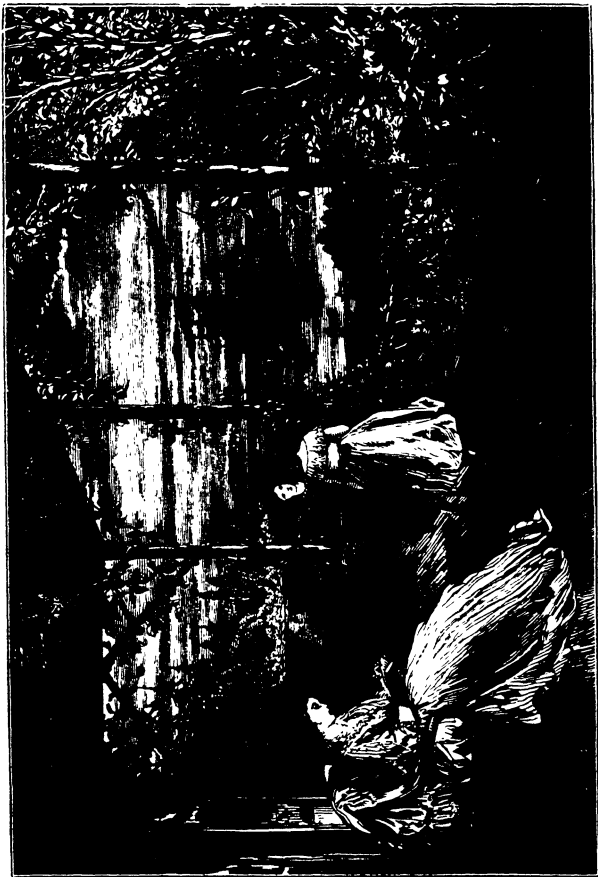
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A CANADIAN TALE.

By M. L. G.

TORONTO: JAMES CAMPBELL AND SON.

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"After tea, they went back to the verandah, to enjoy the cool pleasant evening, and watch the fire-flies gleaming out among the dark foliage."—*Page 101.*

Lyons's



KATIE JOHNSTONE'S CROSS

A Canadian Tale

By A. M. M.

"With patience, then, the course of duty run,
God never does, nor suffers to be done,
But that which thou would'st wish, if thou could'st see
The end of all events as well as He!"

TORONTO
JAMES CAMPBELL AND SON

1870

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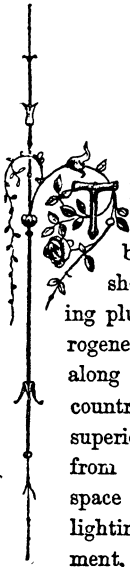
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CHAPTER I.

What a Day may bring forth.

*"How few, who from their youthful day
Look on to what their life may be,
Painting the vision of the way
In colours soft, and bright, and free ;—
How few, who to such paths have brought
The hopes and dreams of early thought !
For God, through ways they have not known,
Will lead His own !"*



HE half-golden, half-rosy glow of the early winter morning was just beginning to brighten up the village of Lynford, and show against the clear frosty sky the wreathing plumes of smoke that ascended from the heterogeneous cluster of houses which lay straggled along the river-bank, and^d back to the quiet country fields. In one of the houses, of rather superior pretensions, standing a little way back from one of the quieter streets, with a garden space in front of it, the morning brightness was lighting up a plain, unluxurious sleeping apartment, in which a little girl of some thirteen or fourteen years was performing her toilet as fast.

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as frost-nipped fingers would do it. That completed, and a hurried—alas! too hurried—prayer said, she ran quickly down to the only warm place to be found at that early hour in the house, the hall-stove, and, taking up a satchel of books, was soon deep in the study of “Magnall’s Questions” and “Pinnock’s Catechism.” Before the earnest revisal was completed—it was a monthly examination-day—the one domestic of the household, a hard-featured, but kindly-looking woman, appeared with turned-up sleeves, bringing a little tray, on which were coffee and bread and butter for the young student.

“You’d better have your breakfast here, Miss Katie; for it’s dreadful cold yet in the sitting-room, and no one stirrin’ yet but yourself.”

It was nearly the same speech which almost always accompanied Katie’s breakfast, for there was not much family life in her home; and the little girl, having to start early for school, was accustomed to have no company but her books at the morning meal. She could remember when it had been otherwise; but her mother was often ailing now, ever since Hughie had been laid in his little grave under the pine-trees; and “papa—well, papa was often very strange now;” and her dear brother Ned, Katie’s especial hero and idol, was far away at college, and would not be back till the grass was growing green again. So Katie hastily swallowed her solitary breakfast, and rushed up-stairs to put on her wraps for school. Some one was stirring then, however, and as she passed a half-closed door on her way down again, a sweet, though careworn, face looked out, and a gentle voice said, “Katie, darling,

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it's a cold morning—are you sure you are well wrapped up?"

The little girl warmly returned her mother's kiss and embrace, and assured her "she had put on everything she could think of." "And I must be quick, mamma, dear,—for it's examination-day, and I've a lesson to look over yet when I get to school, and you know I want to get marks for the Easter prize!"

"Well, don't set your heart too much on it, Katie. Good-by, my own darling." And the mother, with, perhaps, that strange prevision of coming ill which sometimes weighs down our hearts without apparent reason, clasped her bright, happy Katie,—her only comfort, as she unconsciously called her,—to her heart, and again kissing her, let her go. We will not linger over her morning's work, her persevering, loving efforts to soothe the capricious fretfulness of a gloomy, dispirited man, sunk into morning misery in the reaction resulting from the excitement of evening dissipation, but who had been the loving husband of her youth, and whose sins her woman's love still sought to cover. Such scenes are of too frequent occurrence, but they are too sad to chronicle; and it is Katie—not Katie's mother—with whom our story has most to do.

It was with light and bounding steps—for she was a joyous-hearted child—that Katie Johnstone hastened along the village street. Few could notice her that morning without looking again at the bright, gentle face, with much of her mother's sweetness in it, the rosy colour heightened by the frosty air, the sparkling gray eyes, and the clustering chestnut hair that escaped from the gray

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squirrel cap, rather the worse for the wear. Not that Katie minded this much ; her head was happily too full at that moment of the dates of the reigns of the English kings, which she was trying to reduce to their proper order, in a brain not so quick at figures as at most other things. Her train of thought was, however, interrupted by the scraping of little paws against her dress, which made her aware that her pet dog, Jet, had escaped from Martha's watchful morning supervision, and was demonstrating his delight at having made good his purpose of accompanying his little mistress to school. Poor Jet was, like many human beings, not wise enough to know that the securing of the object on which they are most set is sometimes the worst thing that can befall them. However, it was too late now to take him back, so Katie was obliged, not very reluctantly it must be confessed, to let him follow her the rest of the way to school, where she coaxed him into his usual place on such occasions, the mat in the lobby, on which he lay, stretching out his paws to the grateful heat.

Miss Fleming's "Academy for Young Ladies" was one of the old-fashioned type, where verbal accuracy of repetition and neat sewing were the chief things insisted on,—very good things, too, so far as they go. Few girls left the school without being able to do "plain sewing" with skill ; and the embroidery they wrought was celebrated for miles around, for the farmers' daughters, who came as boarders, generally carried home with them some trophy of their achievements in this line. Miss Elizabeth Fleming taught the rudiments of music on an old-fashioned jingling piano to the girls whose parents desired for them that ladylike

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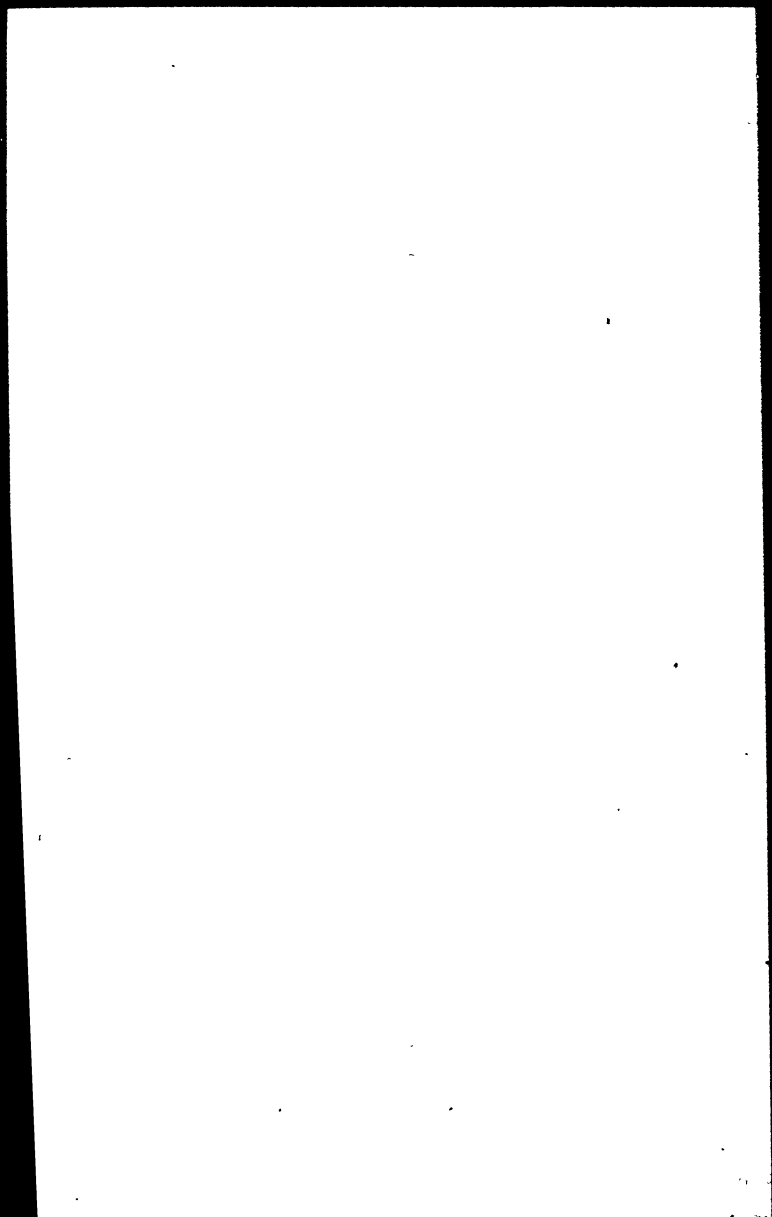
accomplishment. Of these, Katie, however, was not one, her mother being able to give her at home as much instruction in music as she was yet capable of ; and the fees, small as they were, being of some importance in a family where money was not too plentiful.

To-day was, as Katie had said, the monthly revision and examination day ; and since on the results of these examinations depended the appropriation of the prize for general proficiency to be given at Easter, there was more excitement as the girls took their places than usually attended the routine of the daily lessons. Katie took her place with a bright consciousness that she was thoroughly at home in most of the prescribed subjects, the dates being the only thing that troubled her. She was quicker and fonder of study than most of her classmates, and she would have had but little fear for the prize, which she was ambitious to carry off, had it not been for the presence of a girl about her own age, who was not one of Miss Fleming's regular scholars. The Winstanleys, who lived in the handsomest house about Lynford, had usually a daily governess, and they were not allowed to mix much with the Lynford girls ; but as the young lady who discharged the duties of governess had been for some time unavoidably absent, Miss Clara Winstanley was for the present a pupil of Miss Fleming's. She was a lively, clever girl, with a retentive, ready memory, which seldom failed, above all in the matter of dates, especially when they had been recently learned ; so that Katie had begun to consider her a dangerous rival. Katie had been stimulated to unusual exertions on this occasion, and the competition was rather in her favour, till

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Miss Fleming asked a question which she answered at once, according to its apparent meaning, but which was not the one the teacher had intended to put. The question was, to Katie's indignant surprise, passed on to Clara, who was next, and whose quick perception enabled her to discover the meaning intended, and answer it correctly. Poor Katie felt unjustly treated, and the incident so disturbed her presence of mind that more than one mistake followed, and she found herself, at the close of the examination, several marks below Clara Winstanley. It was extremely vexatious,—the more so, as she perceived that Clara was quite aware of the unfair advantage she had had; and Katie thought that, had she been in her place, she would have been generous enough to confess it, even though it were to her own disadvantage. Perhaps in this Katie was wrong; it is not always easy to place ourselves in the position of those who we think have injured us. She could not help, therefore, confiding to one or two of the girls who gathered round her to talk after lessons, that she thought it was "a shame" (in which they willingly acquiesced; for Miss Clara Winstanley's higher position and pretensions excited some jealousy at school), and she could not give a very cordial parting salutation to her rival, who was waiting to be called for, and meantime amusing a circle of listeners with an animated account of some gaieties she had had at home.

But at fourteen, few vexations are long proof against the exhilarating influence of the bracing air and dazzling sunshine of a bright Canadian winter day, and in her amusement at Jet's antics, as, in his highest spirits, he capered



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about over the pure sparkling snow, Katie soon forgot hers. It was a market-day, and the village was full of country "teams," starting for home after the wares had been sold and the various purchases made, and here and there a more showy equipage dashed by with its merry jingle of bells. Katie long afterwards remembered the "look" of everything that day,—the gay ringing bells and the shouts of the drivers, the clear blue of the sky and the pure white of the light clouds that floated over it, the dazzling glitter of the diamond-crueted snow, and, above all, the joyous little black figure that danced along before her,—all came back vividly to her imagination on many an after day, for that was the last hour of unclouded childish glee which Katie was ever to know.

At a sudden turning in one of the busiest streets of Lynford, Katie caught sight of an apparition which always excited her dread—at least when her little dog was with her—Jim Egan, and his grim-faced bull-terrier. It was a question whether Jim or his terrier was most disliked and dreaded in Lynford. As they were almost always together, comparison could not be very easily made, and the matter decided. Jim was the more versatile and ingenious in his ways of doing mischief; Snap the more deadly and determined in his—as cats and small dogs often found to their cost. Jim was proud of the acknowledged prowess of his dog, and of the terror he inspired; and his mischievous, perverted boy-nature found a malicious pleasure in threatening the lives of the pets of little girls especially. Several times had Jet been in deadly peril from the ferocious terrier—at least so Katie thought; though

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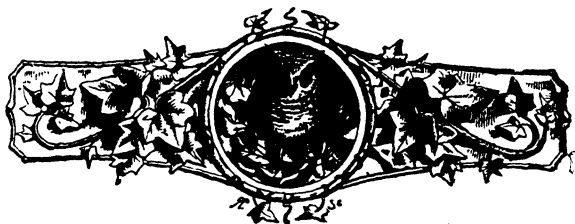
it is probable that even Jim's love of mischief would not have allowed him to stand by and see Snap proceed to extremities. Jet's dread of his enemy was naturally extreme; and now, when he came suddenly upon him, he retreated precipitately towards the middle of the street, whining and turning appealingly to his mistress for protection. Jim, enjoying the evident terror both of the dog and the little girl, encouraged Snap to give chase, when Katie, crying out, "Oh, my dog! my dog!" sprang forward to seize the frightened little animal before Snap's onset should be made. Just as she was stooping to pick him up—wholly absorbed in her eagerness to save him—the Winstanleys' large family-sleigh, with its gay fur trappings and spirited black horses, came dashing round the corner, close behind her. It was too late to rein them in, and before Katie could even become aware of the danger she was in, one of the shafts of the sleigh struck her with violence, and threw her aside to some distance, where she lay stunned and senseless on the snow.

"O mamma! it's Katie Johnstone!" exclaimed Clara Winstanley, with white, horror-stricken face and trembling voice, as she recognised the tartan frock which she had seen so recently. Mrs Winstanley, distressed and terrified, was beside the little prostrate figure almost before the sleigh could be drawn up. A little crowd had already collected around the child, who, though unconscious, moaned as they tried to lift her, and some one run off to find the nearest doctor, who was quickly on the spot. After a cursory examination, he expressed his fear that the injuries were serious, and offered to accompany the little sufferer

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home ; and Mrs Winstanley, only too glad to devolve upon some one else so painful a task, gratefully accepted his offer. Under his superintendence, Katie was gently and carefully raised from the ground, and laid upon the soft pile of furs arranged for her in the bottom of the capacious sleigh, which then was slowly driven off towards the home where Katie's mother was already watching for her return—little knowing what a home-coming it was to be.

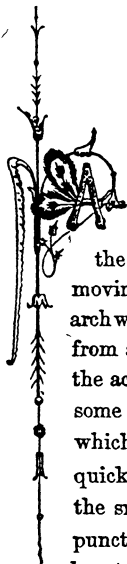
But poor little Jet was left lying motionless on the snow. The horse's hoof had struck him as he fell from Katie's grasp, and the blow had ended his joyous little life for ever.



CHAPTER II.

The First Sorrow.

"A little silent grassy mound—
And is this all is left of thee,
Whose feet would o'er the meadow bound,
So full of eager life and glee?"



AS soon as the crowd of bystanders, which every little excitement so quickly collects, had completely dispersed, most of them in the direction in which the sleigh was slowly moving, Jim Egan cautiously emerged from the archway into which, fearing summary vengeance from any one who might have noticed his share in the accident, he had retreated, as soon as he had in some degree realised the extent of the disaster which he had been instrumental in causing. His quick eye instantly fell on the little black figure on the snow, and with a pang of real regret and compunction—for he had often secretly admired Jet—he stood for a moment dismayed and undecided; then, darting forward while no one was looking that way, he seized the lifeless form of the little creature in his arms,

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and, closely followed by Snap, struck down the first back street towards the place he called home—one of a cluster of miserable huts that stood, surrounded by little patches of ground, on the outskirts of the village, close to the river. He did not, however, stop at the door, where a gaunt, wretched-looking woman was standing, having set down her pail in order to have a colloquy with some passing neighbour. Her shrill exclamation, "Arrah, then! what mischief has that boy been at now?" warned Jim to keep his burden out of sight if possible, which he ingeniously managed to do, as, disregarding his mother's peremptory summons, he hurried on to an empty outhouse not far off. There he set down the little dead animal, and stood for some time ruefully contemplating it, with more of remorse and softened feeling than Jim Egan had ever before experienced. It had been such a playful, knowing little creature; he had often watched its ways with mingled admiration and envy; and the thought of the sorrow which its death would occasion came into his mind. It touched him a great deal more than the accident to Katie herself, who, he knew, had not been killed or "run over," and therefore would, he supposed be all right again soon. But the dog's death was something irretrievable—irremediable; and Jim felt so uncomfortable, that, having no other outlet for his remorse, he vented it in a kick at the astonished Snap, as he came snuffing around, and thus experienced the truth that accomplices in evil are not always the most welcome companions after the evil has been done. Jim's cogitations, although they did not express themselves in soliloquy, ended in a determination to make a rough box with such

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rude tools of his father's as he had been occasionally using, and to give the poor thing a decent burial. "Maybe she'll never be told what happened to it," he thought; "and if she should, it'll please her to know it wasn't left on the streets."

So, to make the only amends in his power, there commenced an afternoon of unwonted industry for Jim. The box, clumsily fashioned as it was, gave his awkward hands some little practice, and for once in his life Jim spent several consecutive hours without getting into a single piece of mischief; so true is the hymn which most of us learned among our earliest acquisitions, that—

"Satan finds some mischief still
For idle hands to do;"

and, therefore, the best thing for any boy or girl incorrigibly given to mischief, is to be engaged in some work in which he or she can take a real interest. When, a day or two after, a rapid thaw had carried away much of the deep snow, Jet was taken, in his rough coffin, to a little knoll under two over-arching elms, on a piece of "common" that lay between Jim's home and the house of Katie Johnstone's father, and there carefully buried—Snap, poor fellow, having no real malice in his fierce canine heart, standing by with wondering eyes, the sole spectator. The place of burial had been selected by Jim partly from its convenience for performing the operation unseen, and partly from an instinctive, half-developed feeling, that should Katie come to ascertain the fact of the death of her favourite, she would be glad it was buried within sight

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of her home : for there are instincts in uncultivated natures like Jim's which certainly were never planted there by any human agency.

We have purposely refrained from describing the grief in the home which Katie had so blithely left, when she was carried back to it, unconscious, possibly dying. All who have ever known a family sorrow will be able to imagine the hush of grief and anxiety that fell upon the house, the suspense while the doctor was making his examination, and the mingled relief and sadness with which Mrs Johnstone received his final opinion, that while no vital injury could be discovered, it was evident the spine had suffered seriously ; but, with the utmost care, and with youth and health in the little patient's favour, he thought there was every prospect of a final restoration, at least to comparative strength. His words, kind and partially reassuring as they were, fell somewhat chillingly on the mother's heart, weighing it down with a fear of which she dared not risk the confirmation by expressing it. So she strove to hush it down for the present, feeling that "sufficient for the day is the evil thereof," and going back to the sick-room, strove to bury the dread of the future in doing everything for the little sufferer that care and tenderness could accomplish.

It was two or three days before Katie so far recovered from the shock to her system as to be conscious of anything but a confused sense of acute suffering, to relieve which opiates had to be frequently administered. At last, in a comparative lull of pain, and when vitality seemed to be once more reasserting itself, the particulars of the acci-

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dent seemed to come up before her in a sudden flash. Then came a thrill of fear concerning Jet.

"O mamma! was Jet hurt?" she asked, in a trembling, breathless tone, that went to her mother's heart, as she recollected with sudden uneasiness that since the morning of Katie's accident she had seen nothing of the dog, of which, indeed, in her overpowering anxiety for Katie, she had scarcely thought. Now, however, knowing what a grief it would be for Katie, and how hard to bear in her present circumstances, if anything had happened to poor Jet, it was with real anxiety and misgiving that she went to question Martha about him. Martha had not forgotten him, though every one else had, and being really fond of him, both for his own sake and Katie's, had instituted a private search of her own, but had not succeeded in discovering any trace of him.

"An' it's my belief, ma'am, that the poor creature won't be seen no more, or he'd never have stayed away from Miss Katie," said poor Martha, very mournfully, for Jet had been "great company" to her, and she missed him more than she would have liked to acknowledge.

Poor Katie! The thought of Jet's being lost or killed was very hard to bear! The physical injuries to herself which had been caused by the accident she had as yet scarcely realised, further than in the immediate pain she had to suffer; but the loss of her little friend and companion and playmate—the only playmate of the somewhat isolated child—was a calamity keenly and immediately felt. For the time her own pain was quite forgotten in her anxious surmises as to his fate; and the fast-flowing tears,

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which pain could not bring often, drenched her pillow when no one was near; as sorrowful visions rose before her of the possible ways in which Jet, deprived of his mistress's protection, had met his end. He occupied her mind for days, almost to the exclusion of everything else. She would often fancy she heard his little light feet pattering along the hall or up the stairs, or that she could feel the gentle scraping upon her bed, preparatory to his bound up beside her. And then she would wake up again to the reality of Jet lost, and a burst of crying would follow. She always, however, kept down the manifestation of her grief in her mother's presence, knowing how it would distress her; and Mrs Johnstone sometimes wondered how well Katie bore the loss of her favourite.

One day, however, while her mother was out on some necessary errand, the doctor, entering suddenly, found Katie crying quietly under her quilt.

"Why, what's the matter?" said he, in some surprise—for he had admired the fortitude with which she had borne her physical suffering—"your back isn't paining you worse, is it?"

Poor Katie could not at once reply, and Martha answered for her—

"Indeed, sir, it's not that she's crying for, I'll be bound; but she takes on terrible after her little dog, that was lost the day she was hurt."

"Ah! that's it, is it?" said the doctor, who, being somewhat of a dog-fancier himself, could appreciate such a misfortune; so he did not laugh at Katie's sorrow, and scold her for crying, as some might have done, but talked kindly

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and sympathisingly to the child, till he drew her out to tell him her chief trouble, how she feared lest the dog had been only hurt, and being disabled from getting home, had lingered on in pain, and died from cold and neglect.

“If I only knew he had been killed directly, and not hurt very much, I wouldn’t mind nearly so much, doctor,” said Katie, who already felt the comforting influence of the kindly sympathy, and the relief of talking about the grief which had been weighing upon her mind.

“Well, try to cheer up, like a good child, and I’ll undertake to find out, if I can, what became of Jet. I don’t think it requires a detective to do that in Lynford.” Then, as Katie smiled faintly, and thanked him, he stopped to add (for he was one of those physicians—would there were more!—who love to own as the Head of their profession the Great Physician himself), “And, my child, whether we find out or not, don’t forget that our Saviour says that even a sparrow does not fall to the ground without the permission of our Father in heaven.”

It was a word in season, an entirely new source of comfort to Katie, who lay thinking about it nearly all day. Here had she been grieving over her dog’s fate as if there were no care and protection for it but hers: as if the Creating Love which had given and preserved its little innocent life could not be trusted to dispose of that life in the best way, though she might not be able to see it to be so. If God cared for the sparrows, would He not have cared for Jet! Katie had read that verse often, and repeated it at Sunday-school, but she had never really thought of its meaning till now. Ah! to how many of us do the Divine

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sayings need to come pointed with the arrow of some special affliction, before we can fully realise their beauty and power! Katie had not had much home-teaching in these matters. Her mother, a sincere, humble Christian, meekly bearing the many troubles which had fallen to her lot in that higher strength which alone could have sustained her, had herself been brought to the loving Saviour only through severe trial; but, from being timid and shy in speaking of the things that lay nearest her heart, as well as from an exaggerated feeling of her own deficiency in spiritual knowledge, she had not been in the habit of speaking much to her young daughter of the blessed faith which she so earnestly prayed might become the principle of her life. She might have felt a greater necessity for doing so had she not trusted too much to the teaching of the Sunday-school, which, however useful it may be as an accompaniment to the teaching of the fireside, is of necessity too general, too little adapted to the individuality of the recipient, to be a perfect substitute. Besides, Katie's delicacy of constitution had made her attendance very irregular, and, even when present, she had been apt, like many children, to consider her teacher's exhortations, simple and earnest though they were, too much as matters of course, which the next thing that interested her would efface from her mind. So, though her Bible knowledge was by no means deficient, and she knew by heart the leading formulas of the Christian faith, she had never yet come to understand them as relating practically to herself—had never felt that need of a Saviour which must come to every soul, old or young, when its own helplessness for good and bias

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toward evil are once fully realised. It seemed as if God were now taking her apart for a time, to teach her in His own way the things that were for her peace.

The kind doctor did not forget the promise he had made to his little patient. He had been told of Jim Egan's connexion with the accident, and, from his knowledge of the boy's wild, mischievous character, he had no doubt that he was in some way connected with Jet's disappearance. Accordingly, the first time he encountered him in his rounds, he surprised him by the peremptory demand, "What he had done to Miss Johnstone's little dog?" The doctor's question, however, instead of producing the intimidating effect intended, only roused Jim's defiance, and made him sulky and evasive: impertinent he probably would have been but for his secret dread of Dr Elliott's powerful arm.

Seeing that his first method was not likely to succeed, the doctor tried another plan, and, in a milder tone, told him of the little girl's grief for the loss of her dog, and of her anxiety to know what his fate really had been. Jim's face visibly softened as he went on, and at last he muttered, in a much humbler tone—

"I didn't do nothin' to the dog, sir."

"What did, then?" quickly asked the doctor.

"I found it lyin' on the street, dead, just after the sleigh went away. I guess one of the horses kicked it."

"Well; and when you found it, did you leave it there?"

"No, sir."

"What did you do with it?"

"I tuk it home, and buried it out on the common."

A FIRST SORROW.

"Buried it!" said the doctor, in much surprise; "and what made you do that?"

"I thought she wouldn't like to have it lyin' about the street."

The doctor was a good deal taken by surprise. This was a development in Jim's character for which he had not been prepared. Presently he asked him if he ever did any honest work.

"Don't never get any to do," responded Jim, grimly.

"Well, hold my horse here for half-an-hour, and I'll give you sixpence for it."

"Yes, sir." Jim accordingly took his position at the horse's head, and stood there patiently for the full half-hour, resisting the suggestions of various boys of his acquaintance who chanced to loiter along, that they should get in and have a drive, "for a lark," while the doctor was out of sight. Had Jim not been in a position of responsibility, he would have been one of the foremost to suggest and carry out such an idea; but the wonderfully new sensation of being trusted to do something useful, acted powerfully upon him, and even widened his vision to perceive that there were better things in life than "larks."

When Dr Elliott came out, and, gratified with the result of his experiment, handed the boy a sixpence, with an advice to look out for honest work and do it, Jim walked off with a feeling more nearly approaching to self-respect than he remembered to have ever before experienced.

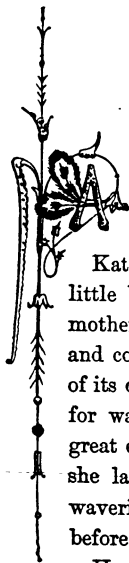
Possibly, too, the doctor, as he drove away, thought of Jim with more respect, and with better hope that he might yet turn out a respectable member of society.



CHAPTER III.

"So stately his rough wind in the day
of the east wind."

"If loving hearts were never lonely,
If all they wish might always be,
Accepting what they looked for only,
They might be glad, but not in Thee."



So the bleak, cold, often stormy, days of February glided silently into the bright afternoons and lengthening daylight of March, Katie continued still a close prisoner to her little bed. It had been removed, however, into her mother's room, both on account of its greater size and comfort as a sick-room, and of the cheerfulness of its open fire, which, though not absolutely needed for warmth in ordinary weather, was a source of great enlivenment to Katie in the long evenings, as she lay and watched the flickering blaze, or the wavering shadows which it cast in the winter dusk, before the lamp was lighted.

Her mother did all in her power to lighten the tedium of her imprisonment, sitting almost constantly beside her, reading to her as long as her own strength would

"HE STAYETH HIS ROUGH WIND."

permit, and telling her every bit of news she could pick up in which she thought Katie would be interested. Her father, too, was much kinder than Katie had ever known him. He was not nearly so often out at nights "on business" now, and would frequently spend the whole evening in the room, reading aloud anything interesting from the weekly paper, which came by mail from the nearest large city, or chatting with his wife in a quiet, kind way, as Katie scarcely remembered his ever doing before. And she noticed, too, that her mamma's smile came oftener, her brow looked much less anxious and careworn than it generally did, and, notwithstanding her confinement to the sick-room, her health seemed better than it had been for a long time. As for Martha, no domestic could have been kinder or more assiduous. She would have interrupted her work at any moment to be with Katie when her mother was called away, and it was the chief pleasure of her life to invent some new delicacy which might tempt the little girl's feeble appetite.

But notwithstanding all that home love and tenderness could do, it was a sad, dreary time for poor Katie, even now, when the first acute suffering was over, and the sense of discomfort was her chief physical ailment. The long monotonous days, that seemed so like one another as they passed slowly by, weighed heavily on a spirit naturally so active and full of life, and which had not as yet much resource within itself. As she lay through the tedious, slow-moving hours of daylight, studying over and over again the pattern of the paper on the walls, tracing out the lights and shadows of the two or three familiar prints in

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their black frames, or counting the cracks in the somewhat dingy ceiling, she found herself going over and over again the daily scenes of her ordinary life,—the recitations in Miss Fleming's schoolroom, the tiresome conjugations, even the dates which had been such a burden to her mind. Then she would wonder how the contest for the prize was going on, and whether Clara Winstanley still maintained her position in advance of the rest. As for the prize itself, it seemed something so far removed from her now, that she wondered almost how it could ever have excited her so keenly. Then she would go back in imagination to that day when she was last out,—see the snowy village street, the passing sleighs, the shouting boys,—and then with a sharp pang would come up the image of poor Jet. Poor, merry, frolicsome, little dog! What a pleasure and amusement he would have been to her now in her enforced seclusion! And the tears would come yet, as she thought of his active little figure, lying cold and rigid under the snow that lay piled so high on "the common." For Dr Elliott had ended her suspense, perhaps even her lurking hope, by telling her Jim's disclosure.

One sunshiny morning, when the familiar ring announced the doctor's arrival, Katie, as she lay listening for his step, was surprised to hear the pattering of little feet, and the silvery tones of a childish voice accompanying it. In walked the doctor, leading a rosy, blue-eyed boy of three years old, with flaxen curls and a face full of dimples, carrying in one hand a little basket, the lid of which he was trying to keep down with all the force of the other, in opposition to some small resistance from within.

IN THE DAY OF THE EAST WIND."

"There! you didn't think I had such a pretty boy, did you?" said the doctor, triumphantly, as he lifted up the little fellow and set him on the bed. Katie thought she had never seen anything so bright and sunny, and her eyes rested longingly on the little round face,—the blue eyes almost closed by reason of a roguish smile which overspread it.

"Show Katie what you've brought her," said his father. The little fat hand was withdrawn from the lid of the basket, and out jumped a pretty little Maltese kitten, nearly as round as a ball, with a silky gray coat and snowy breast.

"Him's Willie's—him's for 'oo!" said the gleeful little voice, as his eyes kept watching Katie's face to see the effect of the important communication.

"And Willie has been waiting a whole fortnight, till the little thing was old enough to leave its mother, that he might bring it to the little girl who lost her dog," added his papa, smiling. The kitten was duly admired and petted; but the bright little face had a greater attraction for Katie and at her earnest request Willie was left, much to his own satisfaction, to spend the morning with her and his kitten, improving the time in showing off, as well as his imperfect language would allow him, the perfections of his gift, and in enjoying the good things which Mrs Johnstone pressed upon him. When at last, rather reluctantly on his part, he was taken away, it was with the promise that he should come back again. Katie and he soon became close friends, and few things gave either of them greater pleasure than to spend the day together; while "Daisy"—for so the

kitten was called—became an almost equally great pet, beguiling many an otherwise tedious hour with her merry frolics, and calling forth occasionally Katie's hearty laugh, which had now become an unwonted sound. Indeed, Daisy, with her gentle, playful tricks, and her necktie of pink ribbon, was fast filling up the blank which poor Jet's loss had left.

Not a few kind hearts in the village had been touched by Katie's misfortune. A good many who had been merely casual acquaintances of Mrs Johnstone's,—for from her shyness and desire to conceal the great trouble of her life, she had scarcely any intimates,—had come to inquire for Katie, and make many kind offers of assistance, which, however, Mrs Johnstone had gratefully declined. Mrs Winstanley had called the morning after the accident, distressed at having been in any way the cause of it, and anxious to do anything and everything in her power for the invalid. But Mrs Johnstone could not get over the feeling of bitterness which rose in her heart against the family, unreasonable though she knew it to be, and she received the kindly-intended offers very coldly,—the more so, perhaps, from the patronising air with which they were accompanied, an air which had become so habitual with the lady who considered herself the leader of society in Lynford, that she could not perhaps have shaken it off. However, she was really kind-hearted, and not discouraged by the coldness with which her advances had been received ; she sent every day to inquire for Katie, generally accompanying the inquiries with some tempting delicacy, which, after the first few days, Katie really enjoyed ; and her

*IN THE DAY OF THE EAST WIND.**

mother's heart began to be softened towards Mrs Winstanley, as any heart almost is sure to be by kindness steadfastly persisted in.

Clara had called occasionally to ask personally for her former rival ; but rather shy of the sight even of pain and sickness, like most very young girls, she had not sought to see her, and Mrs Johnstone did not suggest it. Indeed, Katie herself was not very anxious for visitors just then, and would certainly not have enjoyed seeing Clara nearly as much as she did little Willie's visits.

Besides Willie, there were only two other visitors who were taken to see Katie, or whom she cared to see, but these two were always welcome. One was Mrs Duncan, an old Scotch lady, who lived with her lame daughter in a neat little cottage just across the road, which here, on the outskirts of Lynford, could scarcely be called a street. Mrs Duncan, with her kind motherly heart, had won her way into Mrs Johnstone's confidence as no one else in Lynford had done, and her gentle, cheerful face, encircled by a spotless widow's cap, had been a familiar object to Katie ever since she could remember. She would often come over now in the dusk, or the "gloaming," as she called it, stocking in hand, and sit for an hour chatting pleasantly, as she was well able to do, while Katie lay and watched the fire-light gleaming on her white cap and collar, and making the bright knitting-needles glitter as they moved so quickly in her nimble fingers ; for Mrs Duncan, without being of the bustling type, was never known to be idle, and many a pair of little feet in Lynford would have been bare and cold in the sharp winter weather but for the stockings

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which she knitted or "footed" so diligently when her own work was completed.

But the knitting never interfered with the talk, any more than the talk impeded the knitting, and Mrs Duncan had many an interesting story to tell of people she had met or known in her somewhat eventful life : stories chiefly of trouble and sorrow—since they, alas ! make up so much of the woof of life everywhere—but of trouble bravely met, and sorrow hallowed and turned into gain through the faith which shall so surely overcome, even in this life, all things evil. Sometimes, too, her recollections would take another turn, and she would relate some of the wild legends which still keep alive the love of the marvellous and veneration of the supernatural in Scotland,—legends which, told by lips that devoutly believed them, had thrilled her own youth,—of brownie, and fairy, and ghostly visitant ; till Katie, half awed and wholly fascinated, would fancy them real, and could almost hear the roar of the surge, and see the white foam of the hissing waves, as the water-kelpie leaped up from them to pounce upon his prey. Then again the theme would change to traditions scarcely less thrilling, but far more dearly cherished, and tuned to a nobler strain,—of the stern old Covenanting days, when the struggle waged so fiercely between the powers of this world and the power of truth, and the truth then, as it always is, was great, and prevailed ; when not all the terror of royal mandates and flashing swords and deadly carbines, not the bitterness of death itself, could force simple Scottish hearts to utter a word which they believed false to their conscience and their God. Many

such tales still lingered among the old people in the southern Scottish counties where Mrs Duncan had spent her early married life ; and Katie never wearied of hearing them over and over again, and would lie awake at night, thinking, with admiring veneration, of girls scarcely older than herself who had sealed their faith with their blood. It must have been a wonderfully strong feeling, Katie felt, that faithful love of their Saviour which made them choose death rather than to grieve Him,—something very different, she was sure, from the vague awe and faint gratitude which was all she had ever felt for the Saviour, who, she had been taught, had given His life for her. It was a source of ever-increasing dissatisfaction to her that it was so, and she wondered in vain how she could make it different. She had to learn that no human touch, but the finger of Divine love alone, can open the sealed fountains of love in the closed heart, and make them flow forth in the channels they were intended to fill.

Katie's other visitor was Mr Grey, the pastor of the Scotch Presbyterian Church in Lynford. Mr Johnstone was a Scotchman by birth, and had always adhered, at least in form, to the Church of his fathers ; and though his English wife had a natural predilection for that in which she had been brought up, she had always been glad that her husband should join in the mode of worship most congenial to him. It was but rarely now, alas ! that he was seen in his place in the "kirk," but his wife and daughter went as regularly as the weather and the delicate health of both would permit ; and Katie dearly loved the kind old man, who was associated with her pleasantest and most

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sacred memories, and whose silver hair and gentle voice and manner were in her eyes the ideal of what a "minister" should be. She was one of the most cherished lambs of his flock, and he did not forget her now. His visits, in which, besides his kindly and sympathising talk, he would read in solemn and impressive tones some suitable passage of Scripture, following it with a short prayer, seemed to throw a solemnising influence over all the rest of the day. She did not always quite comprehend the figurative Scripture expressions he used, though they had been familiar to her all her life ; but she thought them over and over now, as she had never done before, and by degrees their meaning seemed, though vaguely, to unfold itself to her mind.

"Mamma," she suddenly asked one day, when she had been absorbed in silent thought after one of Mr Grey's visits, "what do you think it means, 'He stayeth his rough wind in the day of the east wind?'"

Mrs Johnstone was silent for a minute, and then replied, "I think I know, dear ; but you had better ask Mrs Duncan ; she will be here very soon, and she will explain it to you better than I can."

So when Mrs Duncan was come, and settled down to her knitting as usual, Katie proposed her question.

"Well, my dear, I'm no scholar to expound the Scripture like Mr Grey ; but I've proved the meaning o' that text in my ain experience, if ever anybody did ; and that, I think, is aye the best way o' learning. You see, you don't know much, here in this inland place, about the east wind ; but if you had been where I was brought up, on the east coast o' Scotland, you'd shiver when you felt its keen,

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piercing blast coming, cutting you through like a knife. And if there was to come any more wind or storm on the top o' that, it would seem past bearing. Well, it seems to me, when God sends us some special great affliction that pierces and desolates our hearts, He often gives us a rest from other troubles that may have been fretting us, lest, in our weakness, we should sink down altogether, and think maybe He wasna caring for us. And that's the worst thing any one can think about Him who cares so much," she added reverently.

"Tell Katie, please, how you learned that yourself," said Mrs Johnstone.

"There's no very much to tell," she replied. "It was in days when I didna think so much about God's care and dealings wi' us as I have sin'. When first we left bonnie Teviotdale, and came out here—I'm afraid mair through worldliness than anything else, for you see we were very comfortable there, but Jamie had heard so much o' the New World an' its gran' farms, that naething else would do—we had for a long time just one trouble after another. I used to tell him it was a rebuke to us for grasping at so much, though he meant no harm by it. One year the crops failed, and we had a hard fight to win through; another, some o' our best stock died; and another time there was a fire in the woods, that came up and burned our barns and fences, just sparing the house; and then Mary's lameness was a sore trial to us for long. But from the time that my husband was laid down with the disease that took him away two years after, it seemed as if every other trouble was lifted off, as if there was peace and rest all

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round us, and we were left in quiet to meet the great trouble that was coming, though we didna know it then. But even when we did feel at last what it was the Lord was sending us, it seemed as if He put a peace and strength into our hearts that was wonderfu'—as I've often wondered at it since; and when all was over, it was just the same. So I've had good cause to learn that 'He stayeth His rough wind in the day of the east wind,' and none that trust in Him shall be desolate."

There was a little silence after Mrs Duncan had finished, and Mrs Johnstone said, gently, "You told me that story when my Hughie was drowned; I found it true then, and I wanted Katie to hear it now."

"Ay, many a one has found it true, and more would if they were to look for it. Mr Grey has told me he did when his wife died—good, sweet creature that she was."

"I thought him looking thin and careworn to-day," said Mrs Johnstone.

"I've thought so often of late. But it's scarcely to be wondered at. He's no so young as he was, and he has a good deal to mind—more just now, when Helen's been away so long. And he's had a good deal of anxiety about Mrs Leslie."

"He told us to-day he expected Helen home next week, if her sister should then be well enough to spare her."

"Indeed, I'm very glad to hear it, for his sake and for the sake of seeing the lassie back. She's got such a look o' her mother now, and she's such a comfort and help to him."

"I'm very glad too," said Katie. "It seems such a long time since she went,"—and Katie sighed a weary sigh.

IN THE DAY OF THE EAST WIND.

“Ah, poor lassie!” said Mrs Duncan, compassionately, “it must seem a long time to you lying there; but keep up your heart, my dear, and trust to Him who ‘stayeth His rough wind in the day of the east wind.’”

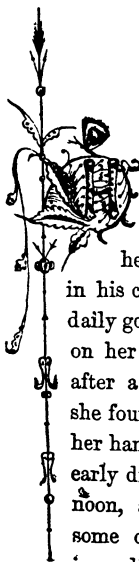
Katie thought about it long before she fell asleep that night, and came to the conclusion that it was true. She recalled the numerous kindnesses which, since her accident, she had received—her father’s unusual attention—even little Daisy’s arrival; and thankfully felt that for her too the rough wind had been stayed in the day of the east wind.



CHAPTER IV.

Good Friday.

"The cross is heavy, child; but there was One
Who bore a heavier for thee,—My Son!—
My Well-Beloved! For Him bear thine, and stand
With Him at last, and from thy Father's hand
Receive thy crown."



ELEN GREY was the minister's only unmarried daughter. She was her father's counsellor and helper,—his "right hand," he often called her, both in the household and in his congregation; and was also the Winstanleys' daily governess. It may be supposed, therefore, that on her return home, the day before Good Friday, after a three months' stay with her invalid sister, she found a considerable accumulation of work on her hands. Nevertheless, on Good Friday, after the early dinner at home, she set out to spend the afternoon, according to her usual custom, in visiting some of the poor and sick, who were her more immediate care, and whom of course she had not now seen for a long time. Among the latter, it is scarcely

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necessary to say, she meant to include her old Sunday-scholar, Katie Johnstone.

It was one of those lovely days which often come in the end of March or the beginning of April, before the winter has quite quitted its hold, and which, with the delicious foretaste of the coming spring they bring, are often more genial than many a day in May. After having been pent up for some time amidst the muddy streets and crowded houses of a large town, in wet, cheerless March weather, Helen enjoyed keenly the exquisite freshness of the air, pervaded with a trace of the balminess of spring, the soft blue of the sky, the sparkling ripple of the little river set free from its icy fetters, and the soft, clear sunshine lying on the sloping fields, where a few remnants of the winter's snow-drift still lay here and there in the shade. Even the animals seemed to rejoice in the termination of their winter's imprisonment; and the boys were celebrating the season in their own way, with games of marbles on every dry bit of side-walk. Yet, with all its sweetness, there was a slight sense of sadness, such as often mingles in the enjoyment of such days; and Helen was not without some associations, painful as well as pleasant, which subdued the brightness of her look, and made her step a little less light, and her eye a little more thoughtful, than they were two or three years before. She was not strikingly pretty nor strikingly clever, but there was a gentle grace in her manner, and a soft light in her dark eyes, which made her winning, or, as Mrs Duncan would have said, "winsome," even at first sight, and those who knew her best loved her dearly.

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One of these was her pupil Clara Winstanley ; and as, on her way to the village from "the manse," which lay at the other end of it from Mr Johnstone's house, Helen passed the turn in the road which led to Pine Grove, as Mr Winstanley's place was called, Clara came bounding up, out of breath to greet her "dear Miss Grey."

"I was so sorry I hadn't gone to church this morning with the others, when they told me they had seen you. I didn't know you were come."

"And I am sorry that you were not at church for other reasons, Clara dear," said Helen, gravely, though kindly.

"Oh, well, I ought to have been, I know. But I felt lazy and stupid. I've been studying hard, you know, for Miss Fleming's examinations."

"And are they over now? And what about the prize which you said you were determined to carry off to do me honour?" asked Helen, smiling.

Clara coloured, and looked a little uncomfortable. "That is one thing I wanted to speak to you about. May I walk with you as far as you are going, and tell you?"

"I am going to a good many places, but I shall be glad to have your company as far as Mr Johnstone's. I am going first to see poor Katie."

"Yes, poor Katie! wasn't it dreadful?" said Clara, a little nervously. "Dr Elliott told mamma the other day that it was very doubtful whether she would ever get quite well and be—like other people."

"It is very sad," replied Helen; "have you been to see her often, Clara?"

"I've been to ask for her, but I was never invited to go

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to see her. I don't know that she wants to see me. We weren't great friends ; and I—I know I vexed her the last day she was at school. I've been uneasy about it ever since, and that's why I wanted to ask you about the prize. You know, I'm sure, that Katie would have got it if she had not been hurt."

"Yes ; but it was in God's providence that she was laid aside ; and though it may be a trial to her, yet, if you won the prize fairly, I don't see why you should not enjoy it if you deserved it. Has it been given yet ?"

"No ; it didn't come in time to be given before the Easter holidays ; but Miss Fleming said I had got the most marks by a good deal."

"Then what is it that makes you uneasy about it ? and how did you vex Katie ?"

"Oh, that's the thing ! Arthur says it isn't fair, and that he wouldn't have taken advantage of one of his classmates in that way. You see, the last time Katie was at school, she had almost enough marks to make her sure of the prize ; and I know she would have had quite enough, if Miss Fleming hadn't made a mistake in asking a question. She answered right enough, but Miss Fleming thought it was wrong, because it wasn't what she meant, and I saw she had made a mistake, and gave the answer she wanted. And Katie was so vexed that it put her out for the rest of the lesson ; and I felt very sorry almost immediately after, and have been sorry ever since. I told Arthur about it the other day, and he says he wouldn't have a prize gained in such a way, and that I ought to have shown Miss Fleming the mistake, instead of taking advantage of it."

GOOD FRIDAY.

"So you ought, my dear Clara ; and I am very glad your conscience would not let you rest about it. I think you helped to do Katie an injury, and you owe her some reparation."

"Well, I'd do anything I could. I'm sure I don't care much about the prize now, at any rate. If it would be any pleasure to her, I'm sure she would be welcome to it."

"That's right, and generous too. And I'm sure you'll be far happier for it. I think you should go to Miss Fleming and tell her how you feel about it, and ask her to award the prize to Katie instead of you. And then you could get her to let you carry it to Katie yourself. I am sure it would please her very much ; and you could tell her how sorry you had been for what had happened."

"Yes, I'd like to do that, even if she didn't care to see me. There's just one thing I'm sorry for,—I did want to do you some credit, dear Miss Grey."

"Well, dear, I'd far rather see you doing right, and resisting temptation in a case like this, than taking any number of prizes. But how will you like our quiet lessons again, after the excitement of school ?"

"Better than ever, I assure you. I mean to study so hard now. But I don't know how Bessie and the little one will like it ; they have been having such lots of play. Now, good-by, and you'll come to see us soon, won't you ?"

"Just as soon as I find time ;" and Helen kissed Clara affectionately, as she bade her good-by. It was no small pleasure to her that her pupil showed so much sense of justice and honour in the affair of the prize, though it did not occur to her—what was the fact—that it was in a great

§

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measure due to the high moral tone which pervaded her own teaching, and to the strong loving influence she exercised on her young scholars.

She was soon at Mr Johnstone's house, where Martha greeted her with a "Welcome home, Miss Grey;" and led her directly up-stairs to the room where Katie, now allowed to be moved from her bed, was lying on a sofa near the window, which, in the full glow of the afternoon sunshine, was a little open, to admit the fresh spring air.

"Oh, Miss Grey! I am so glad!" exclaimed Katie, eagerly, as she entered, a quick flush suffusing her pale cheek, and the tears rising to her gray eyes. Helen kissed her warmly, and then sat down beside her, still holding the thin hand that clung to hers, and answered Mrs Johnstone's inquiries about her journey, her sister's illness, and her father, till the latter left the room to attend to some necessary duties, glad of the opportunity of doing so while Katie had so welcome a visitor.

"It seems such a long, long time since you went away, Miss Grey," said Katie, wistfully, when her mother was gone.

"My poor child!" Helen said, tenderly, "it must have seemed a long time to you, lying here. I thought of you often, Katie dear; and, though I could do nothing else, I prayed that you might have strength given you to bear what God had sent you."

The tears that came again to Katie's eyes were the only reply for a little while; then she said, with some effort,

"It seems harder to bear all the time. It didn't seem so bad even while I had more pain; but now that I just feel

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weak, and am so tired of lying, and want so to be out such fine days as this, I can't feel very patient, though I know it's wrong."

"Well, dear, God knows how weak we are, and He is very patient with us, even when we are inclined to murmur against His will. Try only to feel it is in love, Katie, that all this is sent."

"I know I should feel better and happier if I could love Him," said Katie, in a low voice; "but I can't make myself."

"No one can make themselves love God, or love Christ, which is the same thing," said Helen. "It is He who must give us the power. But one way of making it easier is to think a good deal of His love for us, and how He showed it—more especially of our Saviour's sufferings and death. And if you were to read the various histories given in the Gospels, and to try to realise it as a thing that actually happened, I think that by and by you would feel a little grateful love coming into your heart. Just as, when you think most about your mamma's care and kindness, you feel most love for her; so, when you think most of all that Jesus did and suffered for you, you will feel most love for Him."

"I'm very sorry," said Katie, penitently. "I wasn't thinking at all about that, but only of how fine the weather was, and how much I enjoyed the Easter holidays last year, and I was longing to be out."

"And that brought on a fit of repining? Well, it isn't much wonder. Older people than you find it hard sometimes to keep from that."

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"And poor Jet, too ; I was thinking of him, and how he can't enjoy the fine weather any more. It used to make him so happy !"

"Yes, I heard you had lost your little dog. That must have seemed very hard too. But be sure there is some good reason for it."

"I don't mind it so much now, except sometimes. Daisy, here," said Katie, stroking the glossy fur of the kitten, which had jumped up beside her, "is almost as great a pet, though she doesn't know nearly so much. Mrs Duncan says, 'He stayeth his rough wind in the day of the east wind,' and I think that has been true, for some things."

"My dear Katie, that is something to have learned, at any rate. Now, as you can't read long for yourself yet, would you like me to read some of the chapters that are most closely connected with the sufferings of Christ ?"

"Oh, yes, please," Katie eagerly replied ; and Helen read, in the sweet, solemn, impressive voice which made sick people always glad to have Miss Grey "read a chapter" to them, those passages of Scripture which relate so simply, yet so touchingly, the history of that Divine death, undergone to fulfil the work of a world's redemption. It seemed to Katie as if she really had never taken in their full sense before, and she listened with riveted attention to the end. The story, so old, yet so new, seemed to fall on her wearied, pining heart like the soft draught of spring air that she had been so eagerly drinking in through the open window. When Helen had closed her little Testament, she took from her satchel another little book resembling it in size, and opening, said—

GOOD FRIDAY.

"Now, I am going to give you something else, which I always like to read."

And she read over, very slowly and carefully, Keble's beautiful hymn for Good Friday, which has touched and comforted so many suffering hearts. The last two verses she read over twice.

"Lord of my heart ! by Thy last cry,
Let not Thy blood on earth be spent ;
Lo ! at thy feet I fainting lie,
Mine eyes upon Thy wounds are bent,—
Upon Thy streaming wounds my weary eyes
Wait like the parched earth on April skies.
Wash me, and dry these bitter tears ;
Oh, let my heart no further roam ;
'Tis Thine, by vows, and hopes, and fears,
Long since—Oh, call Thy wanderer home !—
To that dear home, safe in Thy wounded side,
Where only broken hearts their sin and shame may hide."

There was a pause of some minutes after Helen concluded. "I hope I have not tired you out with so much reading?" she said, as she rose to go. Katie looked up then ; she had been crying quietly, but they were refreshing, not "bitter tears," and there was a soft brightness in her smile, as she said—

"Oh, no ! you have rested me so much ! That is so beautiful ; I understand so much better now."

"What?" asked Helen, gently,—*"How are we to be made to love Him ? We love Him because He first loved us !"*

Katie silently assented ; then said, "What book is that you read the poetry out of?"

GOOD FRIDAY.

"Keble's 'Christian Year.'"

"Oh, is it?" said Katie, surprised; "then mamma has it down-stairs, but I always thought it was one of those dry poetry books I never cared for. Is it all like that?"

"Very much," said Helen, smiling; "there are some things in it almost more beautiful."

"I'll get mamma to bring it up, so that I may learn that one by heart, and when you come back, will you find me something else you like?"

"Willingly," said Helen. "I would not advise you to read much of it at a time. You cannot understand it without thinking well over it. Every time I read one of the hymns over I find something I had not seen before. It is almost like the Bible for that."

"Will you come some afternoon soon, and bring your work, and stay for tea?" asked Katie, before saying good-bye.

"Yes, dear, I will—the first day next week that I can. Oh, Katie! Clara Winstanley would like to see you some day; and she is sorry for something she thinks she did wrong toward you the last day you were at school. But I am sure you forgive her, if she did?"

"Oh, yes! it wasn't much at any rate. I was as bad as she was, for I felt angry with her and cross. But I have scarcely thought about it since I was hurt, and it seems like a dream now that I ever cared so much about the prize. I suppose she has got it?"

"You would have liked to have got it, if you had been at school, though; wouldn't you?"

"Oh, yes, I suppose I should. But perhaps it would

GOOD FRIDAY.

have made me proud. And I couldn't bear any one to get before me. I'm sure that was wrong."

"Yes, dear; since an apostle tells us 'in honour to prefer one another.' Now, good-bye; I'll see you soon again."

And Helen took her departure, feeling that the restitution of the prize would, after all, be a greater pleasure to Clara than to Katie.



CHAPTER V.

A *Home Mission.*

"Deal gently with the erring ones,
Thou who hast kept thy higher birth."

AFTER her visit to Katie, and a few minutes spent with her old friend Mrs Duncan, Helen went on to pay her visits of charity to her poorer friends. Her last errand was to see a lonely, weakly old woman, who lived in one of the cluster of miserable houses among which was the wretched home of Jim Egan.

Old Nancy had many complaints to make to Miss Grey: the house was full of draughts; the roof leaked; it was almost impossible for her, with her "little bit of wood," to keep it warm; and "her rheumatiz was awful sometimes." Helen sympathised with her very kindly and patiently, and promised to look for a room in the village where she might be more comfortable, though poor Nancy's restless and discontented nature would never let her be long comfortable in any place. At last, when her stock of

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home complaints was exhausted, she began to think of her neighbours.

"They say this never be a healthy place, Miss Helen," she said; "and no more I think it can be. There's Mrs Egan over there's got two childer down sick with fever, an' I think they be in a bad way. That Jim, to be sure, 'twouldn't be much loss to her if he was out of the way; for he's no good—a regular plague of a boy, always a-teasin' and a worryin' of my poor cat when he's well, and doin' no end of mischief."

"And is Jim sick now?" asked Helen.

"Yes; he's been down sick near a week now, and never a doctor have they got; and one of the little ones has taken ill now; and what with the drink an' want of work, I don't believe they've got food in the house to give them to eat."

"And does no one know of their condition—no one that could help them, I mean?"

"It's my belief they don't know any one as can help them. They've never gone to church since I lived here; and no more they could in the rags they've got. Sometimes two of the girls goes out with a basket; but Jim, he won't beg nor do nothin' useful."

"I must go and see them, Nancy; they mustn't be left in such misery," said Helen, rising to go.

"But you won't go in, Miss Helen, and them havin' fever; it's like as not it's catchin'."

"I don't think it will be likely to hurt me, if I am in there only a few minutes. It is more likely that the misery they live in causes it. At all events, I must see. So, good-bye, Nancy. I won't forget to look out for you."

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And she hastened away to avoid Nancy's usual formula of profusely-uttered farewell blessings, but which always grated on Helen's ear as an unmeaning repetition of sacred words, which yet, she believed, she could not very well check.

On knocking at Mrs Egan's door, it was opened by a wretched-looking woman, whose dirty and tattered garments told the same tale of laziness, if not dissipation, as did the equally dirty house, in which every article of scanty furnishing seemed to be out of its place. There was scarcely any fire in the stove, though the evening was growing chilly, and no apparent preparation for an evening meal. Two grimy children were fighting over a crust of bread, and a miserable baby lay kicking on the floor. Mrs Egan looked with some surprise at her unknown visitor, who quickly explained the occasion of her visit.

"I heard you had two children ill, and I came in to see if you were in need of anything I can procure for you."

"Shure it's most things we're in nade of indade," said the woman, with an attempt at a laugh. "Will ye please to come in, though it's but a poor place for the likes o' you;" and she made a vigorous though vain attempt to wipe a chair for the stranger's accommodation.

Helen asked for the sick children, and was taken to the door of a little place boarded roughly off from the rest of the house, where, in a wretched bed, lay Jim and his little sister. Both seemed too heavy with sickness even to look up; but she could see that the flush of fever was strong, and that they seemed very ill. There was no trace of any

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kind of sick-room comfort, and Helen presently said to the mother—

“Have you asked no doctor to come? You surely should do so.”

“Och, where’s the use o’ botherin’ a docther to come here, and never a hap’orth to pay him with? I had the fever once myself, and got well, wid never a docther to come near me.”

“Yes, but it isn’t right to run risks; and these children need something done for them; the doctor would tell you what. I know one who would come, even if you can’t pay him, and I will ask him as I go home. Is your husband here?”

“No, miss; he’s been away in the country these tin days lookin’ for work, an’ sorra a bit do I know what’s become of him; an’ the last bit o’ wood I had I chopped up meself last night. One o’ the childer’s out now pickin’ chips.”

Helen made no promises for the present, but left the house, thinking as she went how she could devise means to supply needs which were so urgent. The woman was at all events not a clamorous beggar, and it was plain that the case was as bad as she had represented it. She went first to see Dr Elliott, whom she found at home; as soon as she explained her errand, she found that his interest was awakened at once. “That boy,” said he, “has been on my conscience the last two or three weeks. I found that his badness, which has made him a nuisance in the village, proceeded almost altogether from want of any useful outlet for his energy; and I have had him here two or three times shovelling snow, and doing little odd

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joba. I never saw a boy work better, and he looked as proud as a prince when I paid him for his services. I was intending to try and find some regular occupation for him, but I haven't seen him for two or three weeks, and I've been too busy to hunt him up. I'll go and see him to-night."

"They seem to be in great present need," said Helen.

"Well, leave that to me; you've got enough on your hands in that line. I'll see that they don't starve; and I've got a patient near there who just wants something to do and take an interest in, so I'll set her to making beef-tea for them."

"Thank you, doctor; it's quite a weight off my mind. I felt they mustn't be left in such distress, and I did not know how it was to be managed, they need so many things. But I don't mean you to have it all; I want to help too; and you must tell me what will be of most use when you have seen them."

When Helen went next to see the Egans, she found that the doctor had been as good as his word, and that their immediate necessities for food and fuel had been supplied. The disease was pronounced to be a typhoid fever; and Dr Elliott cautioned Helen that she had better not remain long at a time in the unhealthy atmosphere of the little house. There was great need of nourishing diet for the patients; and Mrs Egan was, as might have been expected, quite incapable in such matters, so that there was need for all Helen or any one else could do in that respect. She interested the Winstanleys in the case; and Mrs Winstanley, who was usually liberal, placed at her disposal

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a small sum of money for procuring necessaries, which was a great addition to her own slender resources ; for her father's purse had generally as many calls upon it as he could very well meet. Jim was completely passive—seemingly overpowered by the prostration of the disease, and gave far less trouble than he had ever done in his life ; but the little sister, whose constitution was more fragile, required a great deal of nursing, and was much less likely, the doctor said, “ to pull through.”

When Miss Fleming's school met after the Easter holidays, and the “ prize ”—two handsomely-bound volumes—was discerned on the table, the general expectation of course was, that it would be handed to Miss Clara Winstanley, who had come expressly to take farewell of Miss Fleming's establishment, previous to recommencing her lessons at home with Miss Grey. To their surprise, however, Miss Fleming informed her pupils, that although, as things had turned out, Clara Winstanley had undoubtedly won the prize, yet that young lady, with most praiseworthy generosity, had wished to waive her claim in favour of one who, she felt sure, would have deserved it but for the sad accident which had befallen her ; and Miss Fleming had no doubt her pupils would be pleased with the decision, and that they hoped, as she did, that this testimony to her merit and diligence would be some small comfort to their little friend in her present afflictive circumstances. The teacher spoke with a good deal of feeling, for Katie had been one of her best and favourite scholars, and the school had never looked quite the same since her place had been vacant ; the girls, too, were a good deal affected, for Katie

had been liked by all, and all were sincerely sorry for the misfortune which had laid her aside. Clara had never been so universally popular; the girls declared among themselves that it was very good of her, and she was far more truly the heroine of the day than if she had carried home the prize for her own. She requested that she might be the bearer of the book—a handsome copy of Mrs Hemans' Poems—to Katie, a request willingly granted by Miss Fleming; and then she said a cordial good-bye to the girls, amid freely-expressed protestations of regret at parting. She began to feel that her sacrifice, upon which she had been secretly pluming herself a little, was scarcely a sacrifice after all, for popularity was a good deal dearer to Clara than any number of volumes of poetry; and when to that was added the approval of conscience, there could be no doubt that Clara had a very considerable reward.

So it was with a light heart and bounding step that she set out to get her friend Miss Grey to accompany her on her errand to Katie, for she was shy of going alone, feeling a little awkwardness in the meeting.

"Look, isn't it a lovely book!" she exclaimed, eagerly unfolding it, the moment she entered, flushed with her rapid walk. "Don't you think Katie will be pleased?"

Miss Grey did not feel quite sure whether Katie might not consider it a "dry poetry book;" however, she warmly admired it, and then prepared to accompany the ardent Clara.

"But what a basketful of things you are going to carry, dear Miss Grey. Please let me carry some of them."

"And spoil the beautiful book, perhaps, if you

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should happen to spill some of the soup," said Helen, laughing.

"Soup!" said Clara, "who for? not for Katie?"

"Oh, no! for James Egan. I am going there, across the common, afterwards."

"Oh, the sick boy you were telling mamma about! Is he getting better?"

"Hardly yet; but I hope he will soon be better."

"And don't you hate to go to such a miserable place,—where they have fever, too?" asked Clara, conscious that such an act of heroism would be almost impossible to her, or to Caroline either, who was almost as old as Miss Grey.

"It isn't the pleasantest thing in the world, certainly," Helen replied, quietly; "but it would be much less pleasant to think that one was not doing what one ought. 'I was sick, and ye visited me not.' You know who says that, Clara? And it is the highest kind of happiness to do His work, so far as we can, as I hope you will know some day."

Clara was silent, till something occurred to direct the conversation into another channel.

Katie was looking a good deal brighter now than when Helen first saw her, and was trying, in her recumbent position, to do a little light work. She greeted Clara very frankly, much more so than she would have done three months before; but Clara was unusually quiet. The pale, delicate look, and the traces of suffering visible in Katie's face, subdued her, and made her manner even timid; and her inquiries whether Katie felt much better were almost

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constrained. She made no attempt to produce the important book, till Helen took it up, and said, smiling—

“Clara has got a pleasant surprise for you, Katie. What do you think this is?”

Katie took it with a puzzled look, which changed into one of bewilderment as she took off the paper, looked at the bright binding, and opened it at the fly-leaf, on which was written her name and the inscription.

“I don’t understand,” she said, in amazement; “how can it be for me?”

“Because Clara thought you had the best right to it, dear, and has given up her claim to you.”

The colour flushed Katie’s pale face. “Oh, but you should not, Clara! I never thought of getting it. It couldn’t be mine.”

“Yes, it is,” said Clara, quickly; “it is yours, and no one’s else. Miss Fleming said so, and I would far rather you had it.”

Katie’s eyes filled with tears, and she held out her thin hand to Clara, who came up to her, and they kissed each other affectionately. They were always friends after that.

Katie did not say much about the book, except, “How good of you!” and “What a beautiful book!” but Clara was quite satisfied.

“I’ll come and read out of it to you if you like,” she said, when leaving, though she rather hoped her offer might not be accepted, for she was not fond of poetry or of reading aloud.

“Thank you; but I can read a good deal for myself now. It will be very nice to have this to read out of.

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But I shall be very glad to see you whenever you can come."

"And perhaps you would like to read some of my story-books? I will bring you some," said Clara, who thought this a very satisfactory commutation of her first offer.

"Can't you stay this evening?" said Katie to Helen, who remained a few minutes after Clara was gone.

"Not to-day; for I have a sick family to go and see, and papa is gone into the country, and will be cold and tired when he gets home; so I must be back to give him his tea early."

"And who are the sick family?"

"The Egans. You remember that wild boy Jim? Well, he is very ill indeed with a dangerous fever."

Katie at once became intensely interested—somewhat to Helen's surprise—till she had explained how Jim had been the cause of Jet's death, and, in some measure, of her own accident—a circumstance which Helen had not known before.

"But I don't think he meant any harm. He did it just for teasing; and Dr Elliott says he thinks he was sorry; and he told him he buried poor Jet. I always wanted to know just where. You don't think Jim will die, do you?"

"I hope not. Perhaps, if God spare him, he may grow to be a better boy. You would like to help him to be one, wouldn't you?"

"Oh, yes," said Katie, earnestly, "if I could; but I am not good enough myself yet."

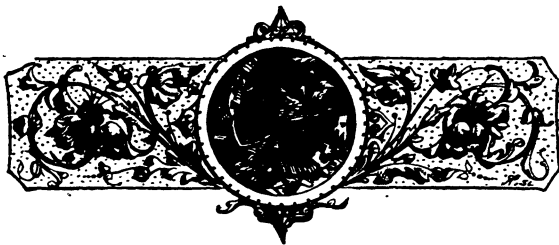
"No one is good enough," replied Helen. "But most

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people can help others a little, if they try ; and in doing so, help themselves too. The more we do for other people, the more we are doing for ourselves, in the best sense, though that shouldn't be our reason for doing it."

"Oh, no," said Katie ; "the same reason as for loving Christ, isn't it ?—' Because He first loved us.' "

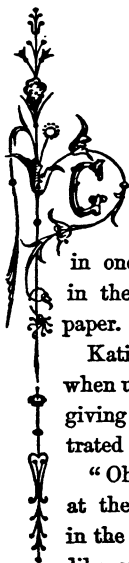
"Yes, dear Katie," said Helen, surprised at the thought which her answer showed ; and she took her departure, musing over the difference which God in His providence had made between the outward lot and prospects of the healthy, joyous Clara, and the pale little sufferer whose sick-room she had just left.



CHAPTER VI.

In Evening Talk.

"I would not have the ruthless mind
That hurries to and fro,
Seeking for some great thing to do,
Some secret thing to know:
I would be treated like a child,
And guided where to go!"



"GUESS what I have brought you to-day," said Helen, when she came to spend her promised afternoon with Katie. She held in one hand a well-stuffed satchel of work, and in the other something lightly encased in white paper.

Katie smiled, and held out her hand. The paper, when unfolded, disclosed a rich cluster of wall-flower, giving out an odour that seemed the very concentrated essence of spring.

"Oh, how delicious!" exclaimed Katie, gazing at the velvety gold and brown petals, and drinking in the fragrance, so rich yet so delicate. It seemed like an embodied revelation of the opening spring to her, pent up in the confinement of one room, and unable

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to go out and enjoy the sunshine of those early spring days—which she so wistfully gazed at from her window—as it lay on the still gray fields and woods, and glittered on the winding river.

“I’m afraid you have robbed yourself though, Miss Grey,” said Katie, presently.

“Oh, no; there are some more beginning to open already; and you have so much more leisure for enjoying it than I have, that it is much better bestowed on you.”

“Yes, indeed,” sighed Katie, “I am idle enough now. I used to think, when I had to study so hard, how nice it would be to have nothing to do all day but read and amuse myself; and now I am so tired of it—far more tired than I used to be of work! I wish I could do something useful.”

“There are different kinds of usefulness in the world, Katie; and whatever is decreed for us by God must be that kind of usefulness which He desires from us at the time. Sometimes the work He asks of us is simply submission to His will, when it is painful to us. Do you know, Milton says, in one of his finest sonnets, about that very thing, ‘They also serve who also stand and wait.’ I suppose it was a comfort to him to think that, in his blindness, when he must have been prevented from doing much that he would have liked to do.”

“Yes; but then he wrote ‘Paradise Lost,’ didn’t he? Everybody can’t do that.”

“No; and everybody isn’t asked to do it, or anything beyond their powers,” replied Helen. “But there is one kind of work everyone can do, at all times, unless under very exceptional circumstances indeed.”

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“What is that?”

“I can best tell you in the words of a beautiful hymn I learned while I was away;” and there came a grave, almost sad, expression over her face, which Katie had occasionally noticed since her return, as something that had not used to be there. She repeated the lines:—

“Wherever in the world I am,
In whatsoever estate,
I have a fellowship with hearts
To keep and cultivate,
And a work of lowly love to do
For the Lord on whom I wait.”

“How pretty that is!” said Katie; “is that out of ‘The Christian Year?’”

“No; it is a poem of Miss Waring’s. I will copy out the whole of it, and bring it to you. It is very beautiful, and very true. But it is only through having God’s love in our hearts that we can put it in practice. And if we have that, He will always show us some work of ‘lowly love’ to do, and give us power to do it.”

“Well, what are the circumstances when it couldn’t be done?” said Katie, after thinking for some time, during which Helen had taken out her work, and was stitching away busily at some coarse plain sewing.

“Oh!” said Helen, “I was only thinking of some such circumstances as prisoners have been in—shut up in solitary dungeons, not even seeing their gaolers, in the dark days of cruelty that we read about. But I suppose that even there a certain fellowship with hearts could be kept up through prayer. Our Saviour may have ways we don’t know of, of

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maintaining fellowship between Christian hearts separated by the most impassable earthly barriers." Again that peculiar expression came to Helen's eyes—an absent, dreamy look, as if her thoughts were wandering. Presently, however, it changed to a smile as she went on,—“But I have read of desolate prisoners, when they had no human hearts near to show love to, bestowing it upon the only living creatures within their reach, such as rats and spiders! And I should think that kindness to His dumb creatures is a work of lowly love that God will not despise.”

“I was reading in a volume of ‘Chambers's Miscellany,’” said Katie, “about a man who got so much attached to a little plant that grew up in his cell; he gave it a strange name, which I don't know how to pronounce.”

“‘Picciola;’ ‘poor little thing,’ it means,” said Helen. It is an Italian story, and a very pretty one. I read it long ago. Well, I suppose it was better for him than having nothing to love and care for. However, it is not likely that either you or I will be in such circumstances.”

“I wish I knew something I could do for any one, then,” said Katie.

“You do something for your mamma by bearing your confinement patiently. Don't you think it would give her a great deal of pain if she saw you fretting and re-pining?”

“Oh, yes; but that is so little. How bad I would be if I gave her any more trouble than I could help!”

“Well, if you are able to sew a little now,” said Helen, “you might help me to make up some things for the Egana. They are greatly in need of getting their clothes washed,

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and cannot have this done till they are provided with changes."

"Oh, yes," said Katie, eagerly; "do let me help you. Is that what you are doing now?"

"Yes," said Helen; "I begged cotton at some of the shops, and Mrs Duncan is going to help me to make it up. She gave me several pairs of socks which she had footed for them; the children who are going about have scarcely had any all winter."

"Oh, poor things! and Jim—had he any?"

"I shouldn't think so; most likely not. His boots were full of holes, and no doubt that was one of the things that brought on the fever. Mrs Winstanley has promised a pair of Arthur's boots for him when he gets well again, and I hope we shall be able to make him decent enough to go to school, if he can be persuaded to stay there. He has never been at school."

"I don't suppose he can read, then. It is no wonder he is a bad boy, when he has never been taught anything. Now, give me some work; you'll see how nicely I will do it."

"I will give it to you on one condition, that you only do a little at a time, and put it away the moment you begin to feel tired. I don't know what your mamma will say to me if I allow you to do more than is good for you."

"Oh! it will do me good; you will see that. And mamma would help too; wouldn't you, mamma?" she asked, as her mother, who had been out for a walk, came into the room.

Katie had previously mentioned to her mamma what

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Helen had told her of the Egans' circumstances. Mrs Johnstone, gentle as she was, could not quite subdue all remains of the indignation she had felt against Jim for his mischievous prank, which had caused so much suffering, and it was not easy at once to change it into pity for the distress of a family whom she had looked upon as belonging to a worthless, incorrigible class. However, she knew the feeling to be a wrong one, and refrained from any expression of it, though it prevented her from cordially sympathising with Katie's interest in them. Now, however, when Miss Grey gave her fuller particulars, and mentioned her fear that the little girl might not recover, she willingly promised to help in the preparation of clothing.

"I have a few things myself," she said, with a sigh, "that might be of use to some of the smaller boys. I should have tried to find out some one to give them to before now."

Katie knew her mother meant the clothes which had belonged to her dead little brother, and which had been locked up for years, Mrs Johnstone disliking even to open the trunk which contained them. So she made up her mind that she would ask her mamma to let her and Miss Grey take them out, and the little trunk would not any more be a source of painful recollection.

When the April day was closing in, and the workers had laid aside their sewing, Katie reminded Helen of her promise to read her something more out of "The Christian Year."

"I have learned that beautiful hymn of Keble's which you read for me, and I have read a little more; but I cannot

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understand much of it when I read it for myself. I know your reading it would make it a great deal plainer."

Mrs Johnstone seconded the request, adding, "The friend who gave it to me used to read it to me before I was married, and I have scarcely ever read more of it than the passages she selected."

Helen chose the first poem, "The Morning Hymn," which she repeated almost entirely from memory, as they gathered around the pleasant firelight.

"That used to be one of my favourites," Mrs Johnstone remarked, when it was concluded. "I only wish it had done me more good." She had a feeling, growing stronger with time, that, depressing as her ill health and many things in her life had been, she might, with God's strengthening help, have found more work to do—more

"Softening gleams of love and prayer
To dawn on every cross and care."

Presently Martha came to say that tea was ready, and "the master" was come in. Helen, to Katie's delight, was to take tea with her up-stairs, and a comfortable little table was set for them in front of Katie's sofa, which was drawn up near the blazing fire, that threw a warm, cheerful glow around the room.

"It seems almost worth while to be ill, to feel so comfortable and cosy," said Katie, when they were left to enjoy their tea by themselves. "Mamma and I have tea up here together whenever papa is away, and I always enjoy it so much. When I get well I shall be quite sorry to leave this room; I like it so well now."

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Helen sighed ; she feared, from what Dr Elliott had said to her about Katie, that her "getting well," which she seemed to look for as a matter of course, was by no means certain, and that a still heavier trial than this long tedious imprisonment lay before her, even if she did recover. However, she put away the thought for the present, and amused Katie, while they took their tea, with descriptions of some of the things she had seen, and the people she had met, in the city where she had been temporarily residing. Then she took an easy-chair by the fire, saying she would not work any more that evening.

"Besides, Katie, I want to look at your beautiful prize. I have never had time to examine it yet. Have you been reading any of it?"

"Oh, yes, a good deal ; and there are such beautiful things in it ! I never imagined I should like poetry so much ; I thought it was always dry. But these poems are not at all."

"I used to like Mrs Hemans' poetry very much when I was about your age. And this seems a very pretty copy."

"And don't you like it now?" said Katie, surprised.

"I haven't read much of it for a good while. I daresay I should enjoy it still ; but one's taste changes as one grows older. It wouldn't do to read one author always, you know."

"Well, read me some of those you like best ; it is much pleasanter to hear reading than to read for myself, and holding the book always tires me a little."

So Helen began to turn over the pages,—magic pages to many a young reader, calling up wondrous visions of the

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southern lands of the orange and myrtle, and though sometimes a little unduly sentimental, are still pervaded with a pure and elevated tone of feeling, that renders them far more wholesome reading than much of the literature of the present day ; and it almost renewed her own early days as she read to Katie the poems she had so enthusiastically admired in her childhood. By and by the conversation drifted away to graver topics, and Katie suddenly exclaimed—

“ I did not quite understand part of that hymn you repeated before tea, where it speaks about the ‘ cloistered cell.’ Will you repeat it again ? ”

Helen repeated the lines—

“ We need not bid, for cloistered cell,
Our neighbour and our work farewell,
Nor strive to wind ourself too high
For sinful man beneath the sky.”

“ The daily round, the common task,
Will furnish all we ought to ask—
Room to deny ourselves, a road
To bring us daily nearer God.”

“ Of course,” she proceeded, “ it is an allusion to the idea that prevails, chiefly in the Roman Catholic Church, that retiring from the world and human relationships, into convents and monasteries, is more pleasing to God, and tends more to personal holiness, than remaining in the paths of ordinary life. And the idea running through the verses is, that as we are placed by God’s providence in the circumstances best fitted for us in this imperfect state, there is no reason why we should forsake the duties He has assigned



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us, and the path in which we shall be sure to find the work He intends us for, and which, if done rightly, will bring us nearest to Himself."

"They must be good people, though," said Katie, "to go away and spend their lives so entirely in praying and trying to please God."

"Yes, indeed," said Helen, warmly, "there is no doubt many of them are. I only wish more of us Protestants were as devoted. But don't you think, for instance, that a poor girl who toils hard to help her family, and does her work well and conscientiously, is pleasing God more than if she were to go and live in a nunnery, and spend her time in saying prayers and undergoing voluntary penances? An old poet, George Herbert, whose works I hope you will by and by enjoy, says something about that—

"A servant with this clause
Makes drudgery divine,
Who sweeps a room as for God's laws,
Makes that and the action fine."

"I never thought before of God's caring how a room was swept," said Katie.

"Why not? How can we tell what things are great and what are small in God's sight? The things we call great may be infinitely small before Him, and things we despise as little He may most care for. Do you remember how He had a cake 'baken upon the coals' for Elijah, when he was hungry and faint, and how He renewed the widow's supply of meal, and kept her cruse of oil filled? And how many little things are recorded in the Bible, while great victories and mighty deeds are passed lightly over!"

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It was a new idea to Katie, as it is to many who have the mistaken impression that "religion" is a thing apart by itself, chiefly for Sundays and morning and evening devotions; who do not see that every act of daily life may be no less truly "religious" than are the definite acts of worship, which are also no less necessary and right in their place, and that it is the principle or motive, not the outward character, of the action, which makes it truly religious, or the reverse. And so they fail to recognise that beautiful harmony of Christian character which comes to light when the principle of doing everything "to the Lord and not unto men" guides every action of the daily life. When it does not, the faith professed, however genuine, surely falls far short of its true end.

"We may see every day," added Helen, "how many little things God does care for. It seems a little thing that He should give an insignificant plant, like the wall-flower there, its beauty and delicious fragrance, and yet I am sure it has given you a great deal of pleasure. It must be to minister pleasure, as well as to express His love of beauty, that He gives us the flowers at all."

"Yes; I never thought about that," said Katie. "But it is strange that so many people—the monks and nuns, I mean—should be so much mistaken."

"It is right to remember, however," continued Helen, "that the system was more beneficial in the ages when it began than it is now. In the dark ages, as they are called, there was so much wickedness and turbulence, and evil of all kinds, that many people felt the convents a place of refuge, where they might lead unmolested the pure and

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pious life which it was almost impossible for them to live in the world. Then the cruel wars that raged made many girls orphans, and sometimes a convent was the only place where they could find a safe home, or a protection from some fierce, cruel man whom they abhorred, and who wished to marry them. The monks and nuns in those days, too, used to spend their time in many works of great usefulness, such as copying the Bible when there was no printing, and teaching the young, and nursing the sick, and preparing medicines, when there were no schools, and no hospitals, and very few doctors. Girls used to be sent to stay for a time in convents, as the only place where they could be educated and kept from many evil influences; and no doubt many were brought up there to be good and useful women. It is not right to condemn institutions which have sprung up in God's Church, and among truly good people, without trying to find out whether they did not at one time serve some worthy purpose. It is only when people try to attach permanence and sacredness to things not divinely commanded, and meant only to serve a temporary end, that they become injurious. So now, when things are so changed, and there is not the same need for convents, nor the same work for their inmates, the Roman Catholic Church, by leading people to believe that it is acceptable to God to forsake their natural duties for others of their own imposing, and lead a so-called holy life in unnatural circumstances, is guilty of perverting their consciences, and doing many great injury. But how long I have been talking! I must have tired you out."

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"Oh, no!" answered Katie, smiling; "that does not tire me at all; and I like to have it to think of when I am tired, and cannot read or work."

The evening had indeed passed so quickly, that both were surprised when the clock struck nine, and Mr Grey, who had had some sick people to visit in the neighbourhood, called to take his daughter home. He came up to see Katie, whom he had not visited for some time, and remarked, with pleasure, that she was looking much brighter.

"Miss Grey has done me so much good," said Katie, with a loving smile; "I have spent such a pleasant evening to-night."

"By the by, Helen," said her father, "Dr Elliott told me to-night he thought the little girl Egan dying."

"Oh, poor little thing!" exclaimed Katie. "Well, perhaps it will be the best thing for her!"

"If it is God's will, undoubtedly it must," said Mr Grey. "Come, Helen, we must be going. Good-night, Katie. You scarcely need me to come to see you, now that I have got my curate here back again."

"Oh, yes! please, don't think so, Mr Grey," said Katie, earnestly.



CHAPTER VII.

Hidden Troubles.

"We see the end, the house of God,
But not the path to that abode ;
For God, in ways they have not known
Will lead His own."

DR ELLIOTT'S fears proved well-grounded. Little Nelly Egan sank under the wasting influence of the fever, while Jim, with his more robust and vigorous constitution, "pulled through," as boys often do, and that under the most unfavourable conditions of bad air and bad nursing, when far more carefully-tended nurslings sink into the grave. So true is it that the Lord alone is the "Giver of Life," and that human skill and care, however right and necessary it is to exercise them, have their distinct limitations, beyond which they can accomplish nothing. Mrs Egan was, as might have been expected, vehemently clamorous in her lamentation over her "blessed child," even to the extent of endangering Jim's recovery by the excitement ; but in a very few days after the funeral she returned to all her

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rough, careless, scolding ways. That she did not betake herself to her usual consolation, "the drink," was only, it is to be feared, because she had not the means of indulging in it. Her husband had returned, having earned a little money in lumbering work, just in time to witness the death of his child, which sobered and subdued him much more than it did his wife: women, when they are degraded, being generally more hardened than men. The money he brought home this time was for once not spent in the public-house, as it would have been in other circumstances, but laid out on necessaries for his family, which he took care to purchase himself; and he thankfully availed himself of an offer of employment which Dr Elliott had procured for him, showing himself, for the present at least, disposed to be steady and industrious.

Now that Jim's appetite had begun to assert itself again, he enjoyed with visible relish the portion which Katie willingly sent him of the delicacies which still came to her from Pine Grove, and he seemed softened and grateful when Helen informed him, as she took care to do, from whom they came. She seized the opportunity to speak to him of Katie's earnest wish and her own, that, on his recovery, he should turn over a new leaf, and go to school regularly, instead of spending his time in idleness and mischief, until he should learn enough to fit him for some useful occupation. The kindness shown to him, so different from anything he had ever known in his life before, had made him wonderfully tractable, and he gave a sort of gruff promise that he would do as they wished him.

The preparation of the clothing had in the meantime

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been steadily progressing, Mrs Duncan and Helen having spent two or three afternoons in Katie's room, cutting out and contriving how to make the most of their materials, and afterwards sewing them up, with the assistance of Mrs Johnstone and Katie. Clara Winstanley's interest had also been awakened by Helen, and she undertook to make a frock for one of the little girls, and succeeded pretty well, too, considering her aversion to "plain sewing." As soon as Jim was sufficiently recovered, and all danger of infection seemed at an end, the four who were old enough were to go to school in a body, under Jim's leadership.

Katie had, in the meantime, been gradually regaining strength, though the varying weather of the slowly advancing spring, interrupted by many a cold and bleak, and many a raw and gusty day, was very trying to her health and spirits. Still, she had many quiet pleasures, which she was always ready to make the best of: Helen's visits and cheerful presence; Clara Winstanley's lively chat, as she came, bringing her most interesting books, and above all, now that the first shyness between them had passed away, her bright, animated face and merry laugh, which always had an enlivening effect on Katie's impressionable nature; Mrs Duncan's wise, kindly conversations, and little Willie's occasional frolicsome inroads;—all these served to prevent her from feeling the tedium of her confinement, as she might otherwise have done. Mrs Winstanley, who had been away on a visit, brought home with her from the city she had been staying in a pretty little bedroom tea-service for Katie, which our invalid was particularly fond of displaying when Helen, and occasion-

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ally Clara, came to take tea with her ; and a beautifully-illustrated volume of poetical selections, which Arthur, Clara's brother, sent her, was a source of especial pleasure. But most precious of all, in their soothing and elevating influence, were the graver seasons of intercourse with Helen, when the latter read with her some suggestive passage of Scripture, and the conversation turned upon those subjects which were now most deeply interesting to her, as they had long been to her instructress, though Katie, anxious as she was to be indeed a follower of Christ, was often oppressed by a feeling of the uncertainty of her interest in Him, and a foreboding that some vague and mysterious change must yet take place in her before she could be what is called a Christian. It is perhaps because the way is so simple that "a wayfaring man shall not err therein," that so many wander so long in perplexity, "seeking for some great thing to do" before they may find Christ, instead of going straight to Him, and asking Him to make them His.

One afternoon towards the end of April, after a day of alternating showers and sunshine, when the sun was setting gloriously behind great banks of amber and purple clouds, Helen came into Katie's room, and found her gazing at the sunset, and listening the while with a rather languid interest to Mrs Duncan's conversation with her mother. Helen herself walked with a weary step, very unlike her usual light elastic one, and as she sank down apparently tired out with the exertion, Katie noticed that she was pale and fagged, and that her usually bright expression was exchanged for a depressed and sorrowful look.

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"Are you ill, Miss Grey?" said Katie; "you look so dejected."

"Do I?" said Helen. "No; I am quite well, but tired, and out of sorts, I suppose. Somehow this spring weather seems to wear one out, and so little tires one."

Katie was not satisfied; and Mrs Duncan, whose quick eye had noticed Helen's depressed air, asked, a little anxiously—"Is your father quite well, my dear?"

"Quite," said Helen. "He has been regretting that the wet weather has kept him from beginning his gardening."

"And have you heard from your sister lately?"

"Yes; we heard yesterday. She was almost well, and going out every day." But though she tried to speak cheerfully, it was manifestly an effort, and the sentence ended with a slight sigh.

Mrs Duncan asked no more, and Helen seemed glad to rest for a while without speaking. After a little time, she exclaimed—"O Mrs Duncan! is it not disheartening? That man Egan has been drinking again; and if he goes on, he will lose the job Dr Elliott got for him; and the neighbours say Mrs Egan was lying quite helplessly intoxicated the night before last."

"Probably that is what set him off," said Mrs Duncan.

"But isn't it discouraging, after all we have been trying to do for them?" continued Helen.

Mrs Duncan smiled. "My dear lassie," she said, "when you are as old as I am, you will know that old ways are not to be cast off as easily as old clothes, and that we have many a disappointment to bear before we can see much good from our work among people like the

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Egans. But you know we are not to be 'weary in well-doing.'

"No; but discouragements are often harder to bear at one time than at another; and I had such good hopes, of the man especially."

"Well, keep up good hopes yet. Hope's a grand thing; and patience—'in patience possess ye your souls.'"

Helen was silent for a little, her eye fixed pensively on the sun setting so grandly in glowing hues, after a day of storm and rain. Presently she said, in a low, thoughtful tone—"But isn't it hard to be quite patient when things seem to us full of unmitigated sadness and evil, and when we cannot see any of the good there is in them?"

"Ay," said Mrs Duncan, "hard indeed, if we are trying to walk by sight, but no' that hard if we are holding fast, by our faith, to Him who knows and orders all things, and sees what we do not. There's a verse I saw in a book the other day that has a great deal of comfort in it, if we could but believe it—and why should we not? I think I can repeat it to you now, for it's easy to remember:—

"With patience, then, the course of duty run :
God never does, nor suffers to be done,
But that which thou wouldst wish, if thou couldst see
The end of all events as well as He!"

Mind that, Helen, whatever the trouble may be; and mind it, Katie, my dear, no matter what may happen to you in this changing life."

"Yes," said Helen, half smiling, "I knows it's true, and ought to be very comforting, if one could always realise it. But still, one can't help wishing, as we see now; and then we can't help grieving if our wishes are denied."

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"No," said Mrs Duncan ; " I don't think it is possible to help it : scarcely possible for the young at any rate. I'm old enough to be able to tell you that a hantle o' time that's spent in fretting is just worse than lost, since it neither helps the thing, nor helps us to bear it. Grief we must bear, and God means it to bring forth fruit ; but the feeling that His ways are hard is another thing altogether, and can do us nothing but harm, so long as we indulge it. But it has taken a lifetime's experience of His love, and many a sore weaning from earthly things, to bring me to this conviction ; and it is one of those things that our own experience must teach us, not another's : though it may always help people to hear the testimony of those who have tasted and seen that God is good, and that His will, whatever it is, must be good also."

"Yes, indeed," said Helen, warmly ; "it ought to do so at any rate ; and I know it is very faithless ever to doubt that. It shows more than anything else how much evil we have to fight with in ourselves."

"Yes ; but when even Elijah, the prophet of the Lord, had his time of faithlessness, it is less wonder that we weaker beings should have our misgivings. But 'thanks be to God, who giveth us the victory,'" added Mrs Duncan, resuming again her suspended knitting.

Katie had been listening to the conversation with earnest eyes, trying to follow its meaning. It often recurred to her mind afterwards, when she had been led by circumstances to understand it better than she could do then. When Helen, after a little more conversation, took her leave, Mrs Johnstone remarked how pale and thin she was

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looking. "Ay," said Mrs Duncan, "she's a good lassie and a bonnie ; but young things like her have many a fight to go through before they can trust themsel's and all that concerns them in the Lord's hand. We canna put old heads on young shoulders,—and, indeed, what for should we seek, since it is God's way to teach His own by the discipline He sends them in life, and *His* way must be best.'

Katie did not quite understand the connexion between Mrs Duncan's observation and her mother's, and she inwardly wondered what trouble Helen could have, whose life seemed such a quietly happy and useful one. She had not learned yet that even Christian usefulness does not always shut out trouble, and that some troubles are all the harder to bear that they are hidden ones, and "will not bear speaking about." It was a truth her mother had felt, however, for many weary years.

On her way home, Helen encountered James Egan, sen., and tried on him the effect of a very earnest, though gentle remonstrance. He admitted the folly of risking his employment by relapsing into his old habits, and acknowledged that it was "too bad altogether," after all that had been done for his family. "But it's hard to bear," said he, "to come home to a cold, dirty house, and squallin' children, an' the wife lyin' like a baste on the flure. What's a man to do but go an' get a drop o' the crathur, to help him to forget it?"

Helen agreed that it was very hard, but suggested that it was only making things worse to go and indulge in the same excesses himself. "Wouldn't it be better," she said,

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"to get one of your neighbours to come in, when you find things like that, to make the house comfortable, and prepare a warm meal for you and the children, who must suffer very much at such times?"

"An' have her ragin' and roarin' at me as soon as she was sensible, for bringin' in another woman!"

"But you needn't let her know anything about it, and the woman could go away before she came to herself," suggested Helen, somewhat puzzled between the exigencies of the case and the feeling that she was advising deception and underhand dealing.

"Yes," said the man, "barrin' the childer didn't let it out. Anyhow, I'm obliged to ye, and next time I'll try something, if it was only for your sake, that's been so good to us, an' the childers, poor cratura."

With which promise he departed, and Helen went on her way, gravely pondering the all but hopeless case of a family with such a mother, and earnestly wishing that there were some kind of inebriate asylum to which such unfortunate creatures—and there are numbers of them in all our towns—could be sent, so as to give them a chance of reformation, and their families an opportunity of getting on, which they would be more likely to do, were they removed from them.

Some ten days after that, before proceeding to her morning duties at Pine Grove, Helen had the pleasure of conducting Jim and his little brother and sisters, arrayed in their new clothes, to school. It was an exquisite spring morning, the sunshine playing bright and warm around them as they passed through the village street, and Jim

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cast many a wistful glance at the fields, and the mills, and the river dashing away over its brown rocks. It was such a day as he would have delighted in for going to the woods to cut "shinnies," or for wandering about the river and paddling in the water; and, young Arab as he was, he felt as if he were surrendering his freedom, even though Helen had considerably stipulated that he should be required to come to school in the forenoons only. The afternoons, she told him, he was to spend in gathering chips for the fire at home, and in any other useful work he could get to do. It was only an experiment, and she was far from sanguine of its success.

After giving her morning lessons at Pine Grove, Helen called in to tell Katie that the children had actually gone to school, and also to give her a little bunch of delicious sweet violets from a sunny spot in the Winstanleys' garden. She found that Katie had taken a great step, having, much to her delight, been carried down-stairs, and laid on a sofa on the verandah, on which she reclined, enjoying intensely the warm balmy sunshine, and the feeling, now almost strange to her, of "being in the open air." As the house was at the extremity of the village, her eye ranged over green fields stretching away to the distant woods, dotted with graceful elms rising here and there with their delicate tracery of branches against the bright sky, and not far off, the river winding along, till it was lost to her vision between high wooded banks. Everything seemed fresh and delightful to Katie's eager senses, so that the mere feeling of existence was in itself an enjoyment.

"This is worth all the stormy, dull days that are past;

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is it not, Helen?" She had dropped, at Helen's desire, the more formal "Miss Grey."

Helen smiled assent, then, unable to repress the thought that struck her as Katie spoke, she said, "I suppose that, or something like it, will be what we shall say when we reach the better country, where the brightness shall always last, and storms and 'dark days' shall never threaten us any more. There is a verse I often think of when things are looking so beautiful here—

'If God hath made this world so fair,
Where sin and death abound,
How beautiful beyond compare
Must Paradise be found!'

And yet there are many people who imagine it must make one 'gloomy' to think or speak of anything beyond this life."

"They must be people who are not sure they are Christians," said Katie, somewhat sadly. "It won't make them happy to think heaven is so beautiful when they have no hope of ever getting there themselves."

Helen felt the truth of Katie's remark, but said, "Yes, Katie; but when our Saviour himself has opened the way to heaven, no one who cares about it need remain in doubt of going there. However, that is not so much the question for us now, as whether we are seeking to follow Him here."

Katie was silent. As regarded herself, she felt that was a question no one else could answer for her. Presently she ventured to ask Helen if she was better than she had been,

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"For you could not," she added, "be quite well when you were here the other day with Mrs Duncan."

"Perhaps I was not," replied Helen; "but it was more my own faithlessness that was troubling me than anything else. Mrs Duncan did me good, and I think I am learning a little more to trust God with all that concerns me. And you must learn that too, Katie," she added.

"Oh, Helen! to think I have forgotten all this time to tell you!" exclaimed Katie; "we expect Ned home to-morrow. The session has closed, and he was to start to-day."

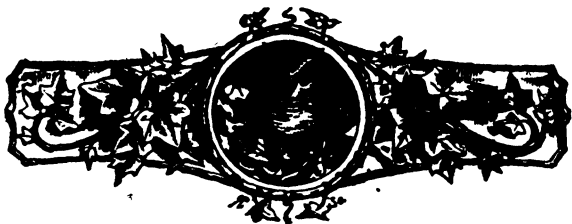
"How glad you will be to see him back! I wonder if he is much grown?"

"He says he is, and that he is going to be my horse, and draw me all round," said Katie, laughing. "Mrs Duncan is going to lend me Miss Duncan's chair that goes on wheels, you know! So if Ned is as strong as he says, he can take me a good way in it. Won't it be nice? I shall be able to come and see you then! What a long time it seems since I was in your house!"

"I shall be very glad to see you there again, and Ned too. I wonder if he has forgotten how I used to scold him for taking birds' nests!"

"And Dr Elliott thinks," added Katie, "that if I get plenty of fresh air, I shall be strong enough to walk about a little before long; and then I shall know better than I have ever done the blessing of being able to do so."

"Yes, indeed," said Helen, "better than any of us do; that will be one compensation for being laid aside on a sick-bed." And thereupon she bade Katie good-bye, and turned homewards.



CHAPTER VIII.

An Arrival and a New Friend.

"Since service is the highest lot,
And angels know no higher bliss,
Then with what good her cup is fraught,
Who was created but for this!"

S Lynford was some miles distant from the nearest railway station, Mr Johnstone next morning hired a "buggy," and drove over to Ashby to meet his son.

"But as I have business in Ashby," he said, when starting, after an early breakfast, "Ned and I shan't be home much before tea-time."

Mrs Johnstone's face clouded slightly at this announcement; she had learned to dread the transaction of "business," and the tavern-dinner, so perilous, as she knew, to her husband. However, knowing well his impatience of anything like feminine dictation, she said nothing, and contented herself with a silent prayer that he might be kept from temptation, and especially from yielding to it when his son was along with him.

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The day seemed to Katie a very long one. All the time she was allowed to spend on the verandah, her eyes would turn wistfully to the Ashby road, which crossed the river at some distance beyond the fields, although she knew it was impossible that the travellers could be within sight. As soon as the warmth of the early afternoon was over, she was moved back to the dining-room, where, as the evenings were still chilly, a fire was lighted. The tea-table was furnished as temptingly as Martha's freshly-baked buns and biscuits could make it, and the room, with its old worn furniture, dull and dingy as at other times it looked, was lit up for the present with a really cheering and comforting brightness.

At last, after Katie, in her despair of being able to fix her attention, had taken up and laid aside one book after another, and her mother, no less restless, though she tried to conceal it, had gone a dozen times to the window, the sound of wheels was heard approaching; and as the buggy stopped at the gate, a tall boy of sixteen or seventeen sprang out and met his mother's eager embrace at the already opened door. Then he rushed on to greet Katie, almost throwing down Martha in his way, and responding to her cordial salutation, with a hearty "All right, Martha!"

"Why, Katie, you do look pulled down," he said, after affectionately kissing her. "Do you mean to say you've got to lie there all the time, poor girl? Jet—Oh! I forgot the poor beast was dead: it seemed as if he ought to be here to meet me. But what's this? a pussy! so you've gone in for cats, Katie, since you've lost your dog. Aren't you afraid of being an old maid? But this is a pretty re-

spectable specimen : where did you pick it up ?" And he picked up the cat, with a view to a closer inspection, but so roughly as to call forth a slight cry from Daisy, unaccustomed to rude handling, and a gentle remonstrance from Katie, who was smiling, notwithstanding, at her vivacious brother's torrent of questions, and the unwonted commotion he was making in the usually quiet house.

"Come, Martha," he continued, "make haste, do, and bring in tea : if you had been out all day in the open air, and got very little dinner, too, you'd know what it was to feel hungry. Well, mother," he continued, "do you think I've grown any since you saw me last ? You have to look up to me now. Look, Katie ! her head doesn't come higher than my shoulder ! Here, will you accept my arm to supper ? You see I've been learning manners in the city !"

"I hope they have all been good ones, then, Ned," said his mother. "But I don't think it is very good manners to want to begin tea without waiting for papa."

"Oh ! he said not to wait—it would be some time before he could get in, and he wasn't hungry, and didn't want anything but a cup of tea. He had a headache," said Ned, with a slightly conscious air, which at once awakened his mother's fears that he knew what it is sad any ~~son~~ ^{son} should have to know of his father. But if it were as she feared, it was better he should not come in till tea was over, and Katie, at least, gone to her room.

So they sat down, not the complete family circle she had hoped for, though, for Ned's sake, she tried to throw off the depression her fears created, and to make the home-coming

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of her boy as pleasant as possible. And, indeed, it would not have been easy to resist his flow of spirits, and listen uninterested to the amusing stories he told them about his journey, and his fellow-students, and his landlady in his town-lodgings. His mother often wondered how it was that Ned could never go anywhere without meeting with some ridiculous adventures ; but the truth was, that he had a strong propensity for seeing the ludicrous side of things. He waited upon Katie very considerably ; and when, from her brightened colour and excited look, it was thought that she had been up rather too long, he carried her to her room, under his mother's superintendence, as carefully and gently as Martha could have done. After she was gone, and as his mother lingered down-stairs talking over the many things they had to speak about after so long a separation, Ned suddenly exclaimed—" How very ill poor Katie is looking ! I thought she would have been stronger. It must have been a terrible accident."

" She is a good deal stronger than she was some time ago, and I hope will continue to improve steadily. The doctor says her great delicacy of constitution predisposes her to the disease of the spine which he fears this has brought upon her."

" Disease of the spine !" said Ned, alarmed. " You don't mean that anything is seriously wrong with it ?"

" The doctor fears slight curvature," said his mother, sadly ; " but hopes it may wear off as she grows. Don't say a word to suggest it to her. There is no use in alarming her at present."

" No, of course not ; but, mother, those Winstanleys

deserve to be prosecuted. I'm sure there must have been some gross carelessness. They think they can do anything they like,—with their big turn-out and fiery horses! I'd just like to give them a lesson!"

"Hush, hush! Ned, dear. I had a feeling against them too, at first; but I know it was unreasonable. It was a thing that might have happened with any one. Horses are always difficult to manage when the air is keen and frosty; and Mrs Winstanley was exceedingly distressed about it,—no one could have been more so, or been kinder than she and all the family have shown themselves. And Katie likes Clara very much; it would vex her extremely to hear you speak unkindly of them."

"Well, I won't speak, then," muttered Ned; "but I can't help thinking."

"Nay, my boy," said his mother, gravely; "it is both foolish and unchristian to cherish a grudge, and an unreasonable one too. Arthur and you were good friends always at school, and you must greet him frankly when you meet him. Now, good-night, Ned, and remember you can only be a comfort to Katie by treating her friends in a kind and gentlemanly way."

Ned went off to bed, only half-convinced; but he was a boy who never did cherish malice long; so when he met Arthur next day in the street, he shook hands with him cordially, and reciprocated Arthur's warm welcome.

Mr Johnstone did not come in till pretty late, having had, as he said, to "see some people on business." He swallowed the cup of tea his wife had kept for him, and went to bed at once, scarcely speaking, except to say how

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tired he was, and that she should not have waited for him. He was in a dead sleep almost immediately, but his wife lay awake for hours thinking and praying.

The next two or three days were wet, so that Ned had to content himself with remaining in the house,—a thing rather trying to a boy of his disposition, especially when left without definite employment. His mother suggested that he should begin a course of regular study, to prepare him the better for next winter's session, but he protested he must have some holidays first, and that it was too bad to expect a fellow to begin grinding away again as soon as he got home. So he made some faint attempts at reading to his mother and Katie, but he tired of one book after another, and threw the last one down, declaring there was nothing worth reading in one of them—"Nothing amusing at any rate," he added; "it's all slow, and tiresome for reading aloud."

Katie wisely forbore to argue the question, though she felt sorry that their tastes did not agree better; but she was too full of the pleasure of having her brother home to find much fault with his capabilities for teasing, which were displayed in pretended attempts to mutilate her work, overturning her work-basket, and in a course of experiments upon Daisy, to find out how far that much-tried young puss would permit him to carry his mischievous tricks before calling her claws into requisition. Daisy was a good-natured, gentle little thing, or Ned would have got a good many scratches; and at last her very gentleness disarmed him, and he confessed it was a shame "to bother her so."

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At length, all other resources having been exhausted, in sheer despair, he betook himself to revising Euclid, ashamed of being so idle when his mother was so busy overhauling his wardrobe, and repairing the winter's tear and wear.

The first fine day, however, brought him more congenial employment, and he proceeded to dig and trim the small garden,—work which had always devolved on him, and which he liked. He dug away diligently all morning, but in the afternoon, as it was very warm and sunny, and it was determined that Katie should have her first excursion in Miss Duncan's chair, which had been specially constructed for an invalid's comfort, he was summoned in to assist on the occasion. Helen Grey came in as Katie was getting ready, and willingly agreed to join the party.

Katie chose a quiet country road, both from preference and from an instinctive feeling that her brother would dislike the observation they would attract if they went through the village. The road led across the common to the river, and ended in a pretty wooded walk beside the broad, swift stream, which had left the mills and dams and foaming shallows far behind, and now flowed on in tranquillity. Everything was full of enjoyment to Katie: the budding trees, some of them so rich in balmy odours; the song of the birds, already so busy in nest-building; the sparkling flow of the water, and the delicate wild-flowers that were springing up in the warm grass of the woodlands. Helen found a few late hepaticas, so delicate in their odour, and made a pretty bouquet of trilliums and wild-violets to carry

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home. Katie's pleasure was too great for words, and she sat very quiet, drinking in all the beauty around her, while Helen talked with Ned, and tried to draw him out on the subject of his winter's studies. It was a matter on which he was not very communicative, and Helen rather feared, from his evident distaste for it, that his application had not been very intense, as was indeed the fact.

As they were returning homewards, Ned, whose observation was always quick, suddenly exclaimed—

“There's a boy over there been standing staring at us for the last five minutes. Is he any friend of yours, Katie?”

They looked in the direction he indicated. They were passing not far from the rear of the cottages where the Egans lived, and Jim, leaning against a fence, was intently watching their progress, shading his eyes from the dazzle of the afternoon sun, in order to see better.

“It's our friend Jim,” said Helen, smiling.

“Oh! let us go near enough to speak to him,” said Katie.

“The ground is too rough for that,” said Helen; “but I'll go and bring him over.”

“I'll go, Miss Grey,” volunteered Ned, “if you will have the goodness to inform me who the important youth may be.”

“He would probably run away from you,” replied Helen, laughing, as she set off in the direction of Jim.

“Who is that boy?” demanded Ned; “and why do you make such a fuss about him?”

“He is a boy Helen and I take an interest in, and want

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to get to school ; at least, she has taken a great deal of trouble about him. His name is Jim Egan," said Katie, timidly, anxious lest her brother should know the origin of her interest in him, and so come to look upon him with eyes the reverse of friendly.

"Oh, that young rascal ! Well, I wish you joy of your philanthropic efforts. He used to be a regular nuisance in the village—he and his dog. Do you intend the dog to go to school too ?"

"I think he and it are both quieter now," said Katie, though Snap was a sore subject to her still. "The poor boy has been very ill with a fever, and hasn't been able to go about long."

In a little, Jim approached the party, with Helen for escort, and looked very sheepish, for *him*, at meeting Katie, who saluted him kindly : "Well, Jim, were you at school to-day ?"

"Yes, miss," said Jim, his eyes riveted on the wheels of the chair, to him so novel as a means of locomotion.

"And how do you like it ?"

Jim moved a little uneasily, shifted his gaze from one wheel to another, and then said, awkwardly, "It's awful dull, miss, sitting there doin' nothink."

They could scarcely help smiling at Jim's cause of complaint ; but in truth Jim, when left to himself, had always some object of his own which he was intent on following, though the said object might seem of doubtful utility to other people. He was rarely absolutely "doing *nothing*."

"But don't you have lessons to say and to learn ?" asked Katie.

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"I say 'em sometimes ; I can't learn 'em myself," replied Jim.

"Well, but you must have patience," said Katie. "You would like to learn to read, wouldn't you?"

"I'd a deal rather learn to be a carpenter," he replied, curtly. Whereupon Helen tried to impress upon him that learning to read was a necessary preliminary to success in everything else, and that even carpenters would get on very badly if they could not at the same time read and write and count.

After they left him, Ned began to rail at them and their hopeful pupil, and Helen said, seriously—

"Do you know, I am really afraid he never will learn to read at that school. He is in a class with little children of five or six, which he can't like, and I daresay the big boys make a fool of him. Then he generally just reads one lesson in the morning, and all the rest of the time he has to sit still with nothing to do but look round him, while he is supposed to be studying the alphabet, which must be about as interesting to him as Chinese characters would be to us. I only wonder he doesn't play truant every fine day."

"Small blame to him if he did!" said Ned. "I'm sure I should!"

Katie, who was silent for a time, as if quietly considering something, presently said, "I wonder if I couldn't teach him to read? I have so little to do, you know. And then he wouldn't need to sit three hours in school for one lesson."

"I think," said Helen, "if you do not dislike the idea, it is the very best thing that could be done ; I would do

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it myself, if I had leisure. And you might teach the others at the same time, till they could read a little. It would only take about half-an-hour, or three-quarters, every morning,—if you were strong enough for it.”

“Oh! yes, I am sure I should be; it would do me good to feel I was doing something useful. Mamma would let me have them in the dining-room, I am sure; and on fine days I could teach them in the verandah. Now, Ned, you’re laughing at it, but don’t, please, say anything to put mamma against it.”

Ned at first teased her a little about her prospects as a “schoolma’am,” but promised at last to use his influence in favour of a scheme which he saw she had so much at heart; and anything pleaded for both by Ned and Katie was pretty certain to be granted by Mrs Johnstone. In this case she hesitated, however, and consulted Dr Elliott; but, as he thought it could do Katie no harm, and that, on the contrary, the interest she would feel in the work might be good for her, it was settled that Jim should be released from the confinement of school, and should come with his brother and sisters to be taught by Katie for a short time every morning. In the meantime, Helen and Dr Elliott also resolved to look out for some congenial mechanical work, to keep Jim out of mischief during the day.

Next afternoon, as Ned was busily engaged in laying out the hitherto rather neglected-looking flower-beds in front of the house, while Katie, from her sofa on the verandah, was superintending and suggesting, Arthur Winstanley walked up to the gate and entered.

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Ned and he met frankly, and after talking a little, he came up to speak to Katie, whom he had not seen since her accident, and whom he had scarcely known before, except by sight, as the two families had been in the habit of interchanging visits only at distant intervals. Arthur had a special reason for being interested in Katie's recovery now, which was not known to any one out of his own family; the fact being that, at the time when the horses made that furious dash round the corner which was so disastrous for her, he was holding the reins for the coachman, and not having strength sufficient to pull in the powerful animals, he had thus been to some extent instrumental in causing the accident. His share in the calamity was a source of bitter regret to him; and it was partly through his influence, and for his sake, that the attention of the family had been so assiduous and unremitting.

Katie felt somewhat shy of him at first. He was a tall, slight, delicate-looking lad, so much quieter in manner and gentler in speech than her own brother, that he seemed considerably older, though in reality rather his junior; and as Katie herself remarked to Helen afterwards, he had quite the air of a grown-up gentleman. His delicate constitution and love of study had isolated him a good deal from boys of his own age, especially since he had been, in consequence, too far advanced for the Lynford Grammar School, on the one hand, and considered not strong enough for college work, on the other. Boys who did not like him called him "a prig,"—a name often unjustly applied, and to which

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his natural thoughtfulness, and rather precocious development of mind and taste, as well as his want of equal companionship, had exposed him. The weakness to which he was most prone was that of indulging in poetic dreaminess, to such an extent as to unfit him for the more energetic business of life; and perhaps the fact that Ned and he were completely opposite in disposition and taste had drawn them together in an intimacy which, if rightly used, might yet be beneficial to both of them.

The two lads sat down on the verandah steps and began a brisk discussion about college matters, in which Arthur was intensely interested; eagerly looking forward to the time when he should be allowed to enter upon his university course. He was, with comparatively little trouble too, already far ahead of Ned in attainments; but his mother, knowing his ambition, was unwilling to trust him away from her watchful eye, into the additional stimulus and excitement of college life.

After Ned had answered nearly every question which it occurred to Arthur to ask, and Mrs Johnstone, who came out to bring Katie in, had invited "Mr Winstanley" to remain to tea, they adjourned to the dining-room, and Arthur, with his usual instinct for books, began to look over Katie's little stock of literature.

"I daresay some of those are quite in your line," said Ned, "but I found them awfully slow when I tried to read them to Katie. If I could get something amusing, like the "Water-Witch," with pirates in it, or anything of that sort, I wouldn't mind reading aloud."

"Perhaps Miss Katie wouldn't care about the pirates

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though," said Arthur, smiling; "and it would be good for you, old fellow, if you did like something higher. I wonder Clara hasn't lent you 'Feats on the Fiord,' Miss Katie; there are some pirates in that, and I don't think Ned would find it slow. And the 'Swiss Family Robinson,' that has a shipwreck, and lots of adventures in it. I'll bring them over some day. Oh, this is your prize, is it, Ned? 'Second prize in mathematics.' Well done! You didn't tell me of that before. Aytoun's 'Lays.' Have you read any of them, Miss Katie?"

"No," said Katie. "I was just beginning 'Edinburgh after Flodden' this morning. It seems very pretty."

"Yes, indeed, I think it's splendid; and you're Scotch,—you ought to appreciate it more than I do."

"Would you mind reading it to us now?" asked Katie, timidly.

Mrs Johnstone joined in the request, and Arthur, always willing to oblige, began the spirited

"News of battle, who hath brought it?
News of battle! who should bring
Tidings of our noble army,
Greetings from our gallant king?"

He read with great animation, entering as he went along thoroughly into the spirit of his subject; and Katie listened with intense enjoyment, for she had inherited her father's love of his native country, and was proud to call herself a Scotchwoman. When the reader's voice, thrilling with excitement, paused slightly at the words—

"No Scottish foot went backward
When the royal Mon fell,"

she could not suppress the feeling that crimsoned her cheek and filled her eyes with tears.

"Bravo!" exclaimed Mr Johnstone, who had come quietly in after the reading had begun; "bravo! I scarcely think a Scotchman could have read it better!"

"I think it would be paying a poor compliment to the Scotch," rejoined Arthur, with a smile, "to suppose that none but Scotchmen could appreciate their splendid qualities as a nation."

"It isn't everybody that has the sense to see that though," replied Mr Johnstone, not a little flattered and considerably surprised by the remark. "Still, a man that has lived a great part of his life in Auld Reekie, and been brought up among all the associations of those old names, can feel a thing like that in a way other people couldn't do. But, at any rate, you deserve a hearty vote of thanks for giving us all so much pleasure. Doesn't he, Katie?"

She warmly assented, though she could not possibly have expressed half the delight the poem had given her; and the party sat down to tea. It was a long time since Mrs Johnstone had seen her husband take part in conversation with such animation and geniality as on the present occasion. His better nature had been awakened; old chords in his heart were touched; and elevating associations stirred up, by the reading of the poem. So wonderful is the power of song to move the moral nature for good as well as evil, and so great the responsibility of using it aright!



CHAPTER IX.

A Visit.

"As the lark in the air and sunshine,
When the early mists are curl'd,
His spirit bathed and revell'd
In the beauty of the world,"

FROM that evening onwards, Arthur was a frequent as well as a welcome visitor at Mr Johnstone's, and he never came without bringing an addition to Katie's supply of books. "Feats on the Fiord" and "The Swiss Family Robinson" were sent to her by Clara the day after his first visit ; but Katie, who dipped into them, and would gladly have devoured them at once, showed sufficient self-control to reserve them faithfully for Ned to read to her in the evenings, which his mother was most anxious he should spend at home. The books proved sufficiently fascinating to interest even him, and Katie, in her idle moments, was ever dreaming, now of the scenery of the wonderful tropical island with its sago palms and flamingoes, and anon of the bold outlines and clear atmosphere of the

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“Fiord,” with its romantic islets and inlets, and the enchanted midsummer evenings, when the sun scarcely sank beneath the horizon, but shone brightly all night over a sleeping country, and only elves and demons were abroad, holding, as was supposed, high carnival.

They excited and enchanted her so much, that she asked Helen one day whether it was right to have her mind engrossed with such fancies.

“I know some people would say it was not,” replied Helen, “and I suppose there is danger in it, which we should pray and guard against; but I don’t think a vivid description of the wonderful and beautiful things which God has created, and of the life of our fellow-creatures in other lands, or other days, can ever do us harm, if only we are looking to Him as the Guide and Ruler of it all, and trying to feel His presence in it, as in all things. I think we are too apt to get into a sort of idea as if He were only present in some places, and with some kinds of people; yet it is good for us to try to realise His presence everywhere, and see in how many different ways He comes into contact with human beings. And here,” she added, “we have so little grand or sublime scenery, that we really need to have, at least, some vivid description of it. How much of the Bible language, for instance, we can hardly understand, unless we are able to form some idea of what a mountain is,—or the sea, when the ‘waters thereof roar and are troubled.’”

“Well, I’m very glad you don’t think it any harm, and I fancy I do comprehend some things better already. Before, I scarcely ever thought what a mountain really

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was ; but since I have read about Salitelma, I can better understand why Christ went up into a mountain to pray," said Katie, reverently.

"Yes," replied Helen, "we may be sure He was insensible to none of the influences proceeding from 'the wonderful works of God.' I think we lose something in not realising more fully that He lived a real human life in this very world, and was surrounded by the same interests, and subject to the same pleasures and pains, as we are. If *we only carry Him with us into everything*, all things will be safe to us. And the thing, whatever that may be, in the enjoyment of which we feel we are forgetting Him, must be injurious to us. The difficulty is, that some things are so insidious in their influence that they sometimes lead us away from Him without our perceiving it."

"But how is one to know, then?" asked Katie, in a perplexed tone.

"There is no rule but the one Christ gives us,— 'Watch and pray, that ye enter not into temptation,'" replied Helen.

Jim's lessons, in the meantime, were steadily going on. He was somewhat shy and awkward at first, but he soon began to feel at ease, and even to make real progress in the hands of his anxious preceptress. The little ones, however, got on faster than he did, being very much attracted to their lessons by the picture primer which Helen had procured for the use of Katie. The little boy in particular, a strange refined-looking child, considering his circumstances, with expansive forehead and spiritual-

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looking blue eyes,—a great contrast to Jim, with his rugged features and wide-awake shrewdness,—had been unusually quick at mastering the difficulties of the alphabet, and was now spelling words of three letters. It was wonderful how much interest and pleasure Katie took in her self-appointed task, and what importance she attached to the progress of her rough-looking class. Indeed, but for the evident good it did her, the attempt would have been cut short by her father, who was absent when the lessons began. On coming home one day, and seeing Jim taking his departure, he asked angrily what that young rascal was doing about there, and when he learned the cause would have peremptorily prohibited his return but for Katie's distress and earnest pleading in his behalf. "Well, child," he said, "it is on your account I can't bear the sight of the fellow; but if you have a fancy for pottering away at teaching such a set, I suppose you must just have your way."

Whereupon Katie kissed and thanked him for the concession, grateful that Ned had not witnessed the scene between them, as she was anxious to prevent his hearing of anything to prejudice him against poor Jim. Dr Elliott, in the meantime, procured for the boy employment in one of the mills, sufficient to keep him out of mischief during most of the day.

As the lovely June weather drew on and Katie's strength gradually increased, so that she could bear the motion of a carriage, Mrs Winstanley called for her frequently to give her a gentle drive. She had had very little experience of pleasure-drives, and these gave her inexpressible delight, presenting at every turn some fresh source of en-

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joyment in the rich vivid green of the new foliage ; the luxuriant pastures dotted with grazing cows and sheep ; the winding river ; and even the little gardens of the village houses, so gay at that season with beds of tulips, peonies, and "snowballs." She never returned from a drive without being penetrated with a sense of quiet pleasure, sufficient to last for days after ; and the "leafy month of June" was ever after associated in her mind with these delightful excursions in Mrs Winstanley's carriage. She generally had the society of Clara and Arthur, as well as Mrs Winstanley herself, and sometimes her happiness was enhanced by the presence of her mamma or Helen Grey.

So rapid was her improvement under all the healthful and happy influences around her, that it seemed practicable for her to accept an invitation, given by Mrs Winstanley, and warmly urged by Clara, to spend a day or two at Pine Grove. She was now able to walk a very little, and would not therefore be so dependent on those around her ; so her mother, in consideration of the pleasure it would give her, overcame her own private scruples about accepting "the obligation," and began to arrange a suitable dress for her to wear during her visit. She had worn nothing at home but the most simple print frocks, and she had outgrown the only nice summer dress in her scanty wardrobe, so that it required a good deal of altering before Mrs Johnstone could consider it presentable at Pine Grove. Even when she had done her best, however, Katie, who was not usually hard to please in such matters, observed that it did not seem to fit nicely ; but when she saw the

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remark vexed her mother, and made her sigh sorrowfully, she hastened to say that she was sure it would do very well.

Ned had been invited to take tea at Pine Grove on the first evening of her visit, and early in the afternoon Clara came in the carriage to take her there. The drive was not a long one: they had to pass through the village and across the river, dashing and chafing among its mill-dams, and then along a quiet piece of road, till they came to the gate leading into the grove of fine old pines which almost surrounded the house, and gave it its name. After winding for a short distance among the pines, which had strewed the ground with brown needles, slippery to walk on, and perfumed the summer air with their fragrance, the carriage emerged with its party into a pretty shrubbery immediately in front of the house, rich with luxuriant foliage, bright clusters of pink and red peonies, Gueldres roses and lilacs, and here and there an early rose-bush just bursting into bloom. Lighted up with the rich afternoon sunshine, it seemed to Katie almost a fairy-land for loveliness. She often tried afterwards to see it exactly as it appeared to her at first sight, that lovely June afternoon, but never could quite succeed, for knowledge of the details of a scene very often prevents us from realising the full beauty of the general impression. On the wide shady verandah, which surrounded the front and sides of the house, Caroline Winstanley, Clara's elder sister, a pretty, graceful girl, about eighteen, reclined in a low chair, absorbed in a novel. The arrival of the carriage aroused her, however, and she advanced with a bright, pleasant smile to welcome Katie, and conducted her to the low seat she had left, where she

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insisted on establishing her, to rest after the drive. Katie was at once won by her bright kindness of manner, and she thought that if she were Clara she would almost worship such a sister. When she was sufficiently rested, Clara led her through the French windows into a cool drawing-room, tastefully furnished, and fragrant with bouquets of lily of the valley and other lovely flowers of the season, and thence to a small room on the ground floor, which had been prepared for her, where she assisted her to smooth her hair and arrange her dress, and from which she conducted her on a tour of inspection round so much of the house as she could see without the fatigue of going upstairs.

When they returned to the verandah, Ned had arrived and Arthur had joined the party. The latter now brought out some of his books, to compare the work he was doing under his tutor with what Ned had been going through at college, and Caroline returned to her novel, though she looked up occasionally to address a remark to Katie, who was very well contented to do nothing but sit still and enjoy the lovely scene and the exquisite evening. Before Arthur had finished comparing notes, which was often interrupted by Ned's college stories, however, and at which even Caroline had to stop reading and laugh, Mrs Winstanley came to call them in to the early tea, for everybody in Lynford, even the Winstanleys, kept country meal-hours. Mr Winstanley, a shrewd, complacent-looking man, rather advanced in life, was already in the pleasant dining-room, which looked out on the pine-trees, and presently the younger children came in, flushed and eager, from a search

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for wild strawberries in the fields. Katie was shown to a seat next Mr Winstanley, who was always hospitably kind in his own house—though he was called a hard man in money matters—and he took care to see her helped to the largest share of the tempting strawberries on the tea-table, and to the richest cream. Ned was quite at his ease, as indeed he was in most places, and kept up an animated conversation with Arthur and Clara, who was in her highest spirits.

After tea, they went back to the verandah, to enjoy the cool pleasant evening, and watch the fire-flies gleaming out among the dark foliage as the dusk drew on. Then lights were brought into the drawing-room, and Caroline went in and sang some of her songs, while the others remained in the soft dusk, listening to the sweet sounds as they came floating out through the open windows. To Katie the whole evening was full of new and pleasant sensations; and when she lay down, she was for some time too excited to sleep.

She was awakened very early next morning by the golden rays of the sun, slanting, in almost level lines, through the pines, and the warbling of the birds stealing sweetly in through the open window, to which, accordingly, she went to enjoy the cool, pleasant freshness of the early hour. Then she knelt to pray, and offer—not a short formal prayer, such as used to satisfy her conscience—but a full, thankful outpouring of gratitude to God for all the blessings she was enjoying. When she was dressed, she went quietly to the verandah, and thence out among the pine-trees, where she walked slowly up and down for a

little till she was tired, and sat down to rest. She was left long undisturbed, for the family were, most of them, not early risers. Arthur was the first to make his appearance, coming by a path through the pines, with a book in his hand which looked very like one of Ned's college books.

"Have you been up long, Miss Katie?" said he. "You seem to have the start of everybody else."

"It was such a lovely morning, and everything is so beautiful here, that I couldn't bear to lose any of it."

"Yes, it does seem a shame to lose the best of the day,—which the morning is at this season of the year. Things are never so fresh and sweet at any other time. I always get an hour or two's study before breakfast, in a quiet nook I have, down there, in the hollow of an old pine."

Katie glanced at the book he was holding. "'Horace,' isn't it?" she asked.

"Yes; I suppose you haven't made the acquaintance of that poet yet, have you?"

"Oh, I have read very little poetry at all," replied Katie, blushing; "only Mrs Hemans, and 'Edinburgh after Flodden,' and a little of the 'Christian Year'—what I can understand of it."

"Well, I'll introduce you to 'Horace,' if you like,—an elegant and original translation," he added.

"Thank you; I should like it, if it is not too much trouble."

Accordingly, he translated for her one of the light, sparkling odes, which she thought pretty, read with his musical voice and rhythmical intonation; but it was far from awaking the play of feeling, or touching the deeper chords,

and this was her chief enjoyment in the reading of poetry. So, though she thanked him, he could easily see that Horace was not likely to be a favourite of hers.

"I'll read you something better than that by and by," he said, as the breakfast-bell rang. After breakfast, accordingly, he handed her a large volume, saying, as he did so, that he fancied that would keep her in reading for the day, at all events. She glanced at the title: it was "Ivanhoe," so full of interest and magical unfolding of romantic delight to all young readers. Katie, with her enthusiasm for old-fashioned things and times, derived partly from Mrs Duncan's old Scotch stories, was likely to appreciate it fully. The temptation to bury herself in its fascinating pages all day, in forgetfulness of everything else, was hard to resist; yet she bravely overcame it, reading it only when her attention was not claimed by any other object.

Helen Grey came to give her morning lesson, which was not, however, begun till she had first promised to come to tea that evening, and, if possible, bring her father along with her. After Clara and the children had gone to their lessons, and Arthur to his studies, Caroline—who was seen flitting about for half-an-hour among the flowers, in her pretty summer morning dress and straw hat, looking, as Katie thought, with her bright fair hair and light graceful figure, "like a picture in a book"—appeared, with a quantity of cut flowers of all kinds, and claimed Katie's assistance in the pleasant task of arranging them in bouquets for the vases. Katie very willingly aided in the operation, for it was work she enjoyed thoroughly; and as they proceeded they kept up a lively conversation, the chief interest being

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Katie's flowers at home, her little lost dog, and her rollicking brother. But much as Katie admired Caroline, and pleasantly as she talked, Katie felt instinctively that she could never hold converse with her as she did with Helen; and that the whole range of subjects which she and Helen liked best to discuss, touching the really important part of our life—our immortal interests—was strange ground, which she shrank from entering upon with Caroline. It is sad that it should ever be so—that the minds of the young should not always be accustomed to dwell upon things unseen and eternal, which, far from diminishing their happiness, would give it a higher and more enduring quality, and impart, as well, a purer and richer tone to the first vibrations of their inner being. But it was not so in the Winstanley family; the "better part" was very much overlooked, or considered as at best, in the culture it received, only a decorous appendage to the abundance of earthly life and possessions. Even Arthur, with his purer tastes and poetical longing for something higher than this life affords, had, at most, only a vague religious sentimentality, and never sought earnestly to realise the meaning of "following Christ" as his Lord and Master.

In the afternoon, when his studies were over, Arthur brought out with him several volumes of poetry, and announced himself free to read to Katie and his sisters. One of his selections—a great favourite of his—was the "May Queen." It was quite new to Katie, who listened with an expression of rapture; till, at length, the sweet, touching pathos of the poem, and the happy Christian hopefulness of the concluding strains, made her glad to turn away her

head to hide the tears she could suppress no longer. Even Arthur's voice trembled as he read; and Caroline and Clara, though they had heard it before, did not listen without emotion. No one ventured to make a remark when it was concluded; and Arthur, as a relief from its tone of sadness, turned to read one of the spirited "Lays of the Cavaliers." Katie, however, when she saw that Aytoun's shafts were, some of them, launched against her heroes, the Covenanters, was roused to indignation, vehemently protesting that it was "not nearly so nice as 'Edinburgh after Flodden.'" Thereupon an animated discussion followed between her and Arthur, as to the merits of the Covenanters and their cause, in which Arthur took the opposite side, chiefly for the sake of argument—a thing he was fond of doing. When Mr Grey arrived, with Helen, the point was referred to him; and Katie, who had got quite excited about it, felt sure that he would take her side.

"Well, at any rate," exclaimed Katie, after Mr Grey had hazarded an opinion, "I am sure the Covenanters were, at least, a great deal better than the other people, and they did not kill women and children."

"I hope they were better," said Mr Grey; "it would have been strange if they had not been so, since they professed to be serving Christ, while the cruel soldiers, who committed the deeds you speak of, were serving only an earthly king, and perhaps had never been taught anything about the love of Christ at all. And I feel persuaded that many of the Covenanters had forsaken all for Christ, nor 'counted their own lives dear unto them' when His cause was at stake. But, whenever we begin to exalt erring men to

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an undue authority, and give them any of the veneration and homage which belongs to the one perfect Man, we need to be reminded that 'all flesh is grass,' that it is only 'the word of the Lord that endureth forever.'" From the moment it assumed this form, Arthur ceased to bear a part in the discussion; the battle was not fought on his ground at all, for Mr Grey's remarks took a higher range than his thoughts had, as yet, been accustomed to follow. There were thoughts that were new to him in what Mr Grey had said; and as he saw with surprise that Katie, who was certainly much his inferior in attainments and general culture, was able to enter into them much better than he could, he connected this with what he had previously noticed in her, and concluded that the principles on which she felt and acted were different from those which usually actuated himself and those around him."

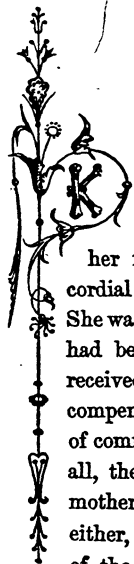
Helen and Katie had a little quiet talk by themselves, as the dusk came on, and then, after some music from Caroline, Mr Grey closed the evening, as was his wont wherever he visited socially—whether among his own people or among others,—with reading the Scriptures and prayer. Family worship was not customary with the Winstanleys, but they were always willing that any clergyman who might be their guest should conduct it. Arthur was particularly struck with one petition in Mr Grey's simple prayer, which he long remembered—"Help us, O Lord, to seek to know Thy will concerning us, and to follow Christ in doing it, assured of Thine own promise, that if any man will do Thy will, he shall know of the doctrine."



CHAPTER X.

Ed's Friends.

Only keep thee on the wing,
Music dieth in the dust,
Nothing that but creeps can sing,
All hearts that soar heavenward must."



ATIE'S agreeable sojourn at Pine Grove ended next day, and she went home, strengthened in body, and carrying with her many pleasant recollections, as well as a cordial invitation that her visit should be repeated. She was not a little sorry to leave a place where there had been so much to enjoy, and where she had received so much kindness; but still she felt amply compensated in experiencing the delightful sensation of coming home after the first absence, and that, after all, there was at Pine Grove no equivalent for her mother's loving greeting. It did not occur to her either, to contrast the luxuriously-furnished rooms of the Winstanleys with the homely furniture of her own dwelling, which had seen so much service, and had so little chance of renewal:—it was all entwined with

the endearing associations of home, which made it look, in her eyes, different from any other furniture in the whole world. Ned was very glad to have her back again, and her papa was at home, and very kind and sociable, on the evening of her return; so that there was no alloy in her pleasure.

Jim's lessons went on again as usual, after the slight interruption. The poor fellow was really trying hard to overcome the difficulties in his way, and was getting on surprisingly well, considering the drudgery it was to a boy of his age and restlessness. As Katie was now able to walk so much better, she ventured to put in execution an idea which had been often in her mind,—to get Jim to show her the spot where he had buried poor Jet. He looked ashamed and awkward when she spoke to him about it, but, encouraged by her kind tone and manner, he at length willingly agreed to conduct her to the place. It was a pretty, shady retreat, now that the elm-trees which overhung it were richly clothed with abundant foliage, through which the flickering sunbeams played on the grass; and Katie sat down on the spot which the boy had pointed out to her, and wondered if there would never again be anything more of her merry, playful little favourite. Jim stood at a little distance, watching, somewhat ruefully, her face, which was looking so much sadder than its wont,—but it was quite impossible for him to express anything of the penitence which he really felt. Perhaps, however, Katie could see something of it in his countenance, for she presently said—“Thank you, Jim; that will do just now. I'm much obliged to you for being

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so careful about him, and I know you didn't mean to do Jet any harm."

"No, Miss, I didn't. Thank you, Miss," muttered Jim, relieved at finding himself comprehended without the trouble of explaining his feelings.

Mrs Johnstone was beginning to feel somewhat anxious about Ned, who was evidently not at all inclined to settle in earnest to the studies which were necessary to fit him for turning his next session to the best account. He might, urged by her solicitations, begin in the morning, but before an hour had passed, he was pretty sure to find some excuse for going into the village, where he would manage to pass most of the forenoon. Then he was often away in the evenings till pretty late, and she could not draw from him a very satisfactory account of the way in which they were spent. One evening, when he was absent, Arthur Winstanley came in to bring Katie some fresh reading, and, after a little talk, asked, somewhat uneasily, "Do you know where Ned is to-night?"

"No," said Katie, looking inquiringly up, for she noticed something unusual in his manner.

"Well, I thought you might not; of course, I have no right to keep watch over Ned's actions, but I felt sorry to see him, a little while ago, hanging round Smith's, with Sam Flint and young Williams."

"Smith's" was the village inn,—like most village inns the resort of the loafers of the neighbourhood; and Williams and Flint were two young men of rather doubtful reputation, given to betting, tipping, and, it was even

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rumoured, to gambling: the report of this, therefore, made Katie look distressed and even frightened.

"You must not alarm yourself unnecessarily," said Arthur, quickly, "I only thought it would be a good thing if you knew, for I have seen him in company with them several times. I don't think Ned's the sort of fellow to go into anything wrong with his eyes open, but the fellows of that fraternity are not likely to do him any good, and you, or Mrs Johnstone, might manage to persuade him to give them up before any harm is done."

"Mamma will be dreadfully vexed, I know," said Katie, "but I will tell her. I know she's afraid of his being about the village so much."

"But don't let Ned know that I have been putting you up to it," said Arthur, smiling, "or I fear he'll not forgive me for telling tales on him. Only I know he wouldn't stand my talking to him about it, and I can't bear to see him doing what I am certain your mamma would so much disapprove of."

"I'm sure it's very good of you to tell us, and we'll take care not to let Ned know you said anything about it," replied Katie; and Arthur, seeing that she was disinclined to talk any more, went away shortly after.

Katie could scarcely bear to tell her mother what she knew would distress her and make her anxious; but she felt that it was necessary she should do so, in order that the evil might, if possible, be at once prevented. Katie's report was only a confirmation to her of the vague fears she had already experienced, and she resolved to take the first favourable opportunity of bringing up the

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subject, and drawing from Ned his own account of his companions. She had not very long to wait for an occasion. When Ned came home, which was not till pretty late, he looked flushed and excited, and his mother, passing close to him, was shocked to perceive that he had been indulging in the poison which had so marred her husband's life, and clouded her own with sadness. Ned was growing so like what her husband had been in his early days, that she was often haunted by the fear lest the same deadly influence which had so changed and deteriorated the father, should lay hold of the son; and now it seemed as if what she dreaded were already too surely in train towards fulfilment.

Ned was startled at her distressed look, and conscience at once told him what it was that troubled her; his eyes could not meet hers when she asked him anxiously where he had been.

"Just down into the village," he replied, trying to speak carelessly.

"O Ned! my dear boy, you have been where you should not, and with people you shouldn't have been with, I am sure!"

"I was just talking for a while with two fellows down at Smith's," said Ned.

"Who were they, Ned? I must know, and what you had to do with them."

"Oh! it was Williams and Flint; they're not bad fellows, though people give them a bad name. They wanted me to decide a bet they had a dispute about, and then Williams, who won the bet, insisted on treating us to a little supper—that was all."

"O Ned!" said his mother, "you will grieve me exceedingly—it will almost kill me—if you go with these wild young men, and learn their ways, especially that terrible habit of taking spirits! Now, Ned, for my sake, if for no other reason, do keep away altogether from it, and from people who may lead you into it!"

Mrs Johnstone spoke very earnestly, and Ned saw how intensely she felt what she said. He could guess, moreover, why her dread was so great, for he knew too much of his father's weakness, and he would not willingly vex her. So he said—

"Well, mother, I'll try to keep away from them, and, at least, I won't drink with them any more; but I can't quite cut them, you know. They're really good-hearted fellows, and they know so much about horses, and so on. I wish you could see Williams managing Smith's wildest horse! You see, it's hard; when I like them so much, to give them up."

Mrs Johnstone sighed; and did not know what to say. She knew Ned could receive only injury from such intercourse, and yet she could scarcely go so far as to forbid it altogether. So she resolved that Katie and she should do all in their power to keep Ned with themselves, and provide him with better objects of interest. She spoke to Katie quietly about it next morning, and suggested that she should set herself to incite him to pursue his studies with greater zeal. She tried, accordingly, various ways of stirring up his ambition, but, to her sorrow, not one of them was attended with any satisfactory result.

"You see, Katie," he said, "I can study when I'm

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pushed ; but it's so hard to make one's self work when you think you can do it at any time, and that it is not of much consequence whether you set to to-day or not, because you have plenty of time before you."

Just then Helen Grey came in at the gate—they were sitting on the verandah steps—and Katie referred Ned's objection to her.

"Yes," said Helen, smiling, "it isn't at all difficult to make ourselves think what we want to think, when something disagreeable is to be avoided. But every day that you lose in that way diminishes just so much the 'plenty of time' that you have before you."

"Well, when I do begin I can soon make it up," said Ned.

"It will always be harder to begin though ; and I don't know that you can ever make up for hours that have really been lost. Every day has its own allotted work, and whatever isn't done in its own time will sooner or later take away from the time that is given for something else. I believe we shall all have to account for every moment that we waste wilfully."

"Some people will have to account for an awful lot of them, then," said Ned, half-laughing, as he stripped the bark off a small branch that he held in his hand.

"Well, see that you are not among the number," rejoined Helen.

Ned gave a deep-drawn sigh, with a comical look of resignation, and said—

"At least Winstanley won't have to account for many, I should think ; he reads and studies all the time he isn't asleep."

"Yes, I think he is very diligent," replied Helen; "but it does not follow that when a person reads or studies constantly, he may not have to account for time misspent. If we neglect the work given us to do at any particular moment, for the sake of something else that we may like better, even should it happen to be study, we would be mispending our time all the same as if we were idle."

Ned opened his eyes. "Well, now, I thought that if a fellow was studying, he must be all right."

"And if Dr Elliott, then, were to study all day, and neglect his patients, would *he* be all right?"

"Oh, no, of course not. Well, I only wish *I* had some work appointed for me that isn't study. I think I'd do it."

"Don't be too sure of that. It's a great deal easier to think we would do work we haven't got to do, than it might be to do it if we had it. However, I have lectured you quite enough," she added, laughing, "and now I must go; so good-bye."

"Wait, Helen," said Katie, "we'll go part of the way with you; it's so pleasant now for a walk."

And they set out together, Katie delighting to show the very noticeable improvement in her pedestrian capabilities.

As they returned home, they passed young Flint and Williams lounging beside a fence. They nodded familiarly to Ned; but Katie quickened her pace slightly, and they were speedily passed.

"They're very good fellows, Katie, I assure you," said Ned, eagerly, as he noticed her shrinking from them. "There's Williams, I believe he would give away the last shilling he had to any friend who needed it."

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"Then it's a great pity, Ned, that he isn't steady as well. He'll never be able to do much good to his friends unless he is; and if he were really good-hearted, he would not grieve them by behaving as he does. Mrs Duncan told us that his poor mother was nearly heart-broken about him, and that she didn't think he would ever settle to anything steadily. I'm sure it would kill mamma if you were to go on like that, Ned; and would you deserve to be called 'good-hearted' then?"

Ned said nothing, but began to whistle to himself, thoughtfully. Presently he exclaimed—

"Well, it's rather hard in a place like this, where there are so few people, to have to break with the only fellows one cares much about."

"Oh, Ned," said Katie, reproachfully, "isn't Arthur Winstanley far better company for you than those two young men you have so taken to?"

"Oh, Arthur's very well for some things," rejoined Ned; "but he's rather slow, you see. He's very nice company for you girls, that like to have poetry read to you, and all that sort of thing; but I get tired of his always mooning over things I don't care much about. Of course, it may be my bad taste; but I'd sooner be able to judge of a good horse when I see one, than know all the poetry and classics that he's got in his head. I wonder what good they'll ever do to any one?"

"I suppose people wouldn't have to learn them at college unless they were to do them good," said Katie, timidly, feeling that she was treading on unknown ground.

"Well, it's my belief that half the fellows I know at

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college won't be a bit the better of all they learn there."

"Then it must be their own faults," said Katie; "for Helen says, that whatever it is our duty to do, we shall be the better for doing it faithfully; and it must be one's duty to study faithfully when one is at college."

To this Ned did not care to reply; he had a great respect for Helen's opinion, and he felt there was some force in Katie's logic. So he was glad of an unexpected apparition to turn the conversation.

"I declare!—the old proverb, you know—if that isn't Arthur riding as I never saw him ride before! I didn't believe he could go like that," he said, half to himself. "Holloa, Arthur, what's up?" he shouted, as he came nearer.

"Oh, a little child near our gate's got scalded, and I'm looking for Dr Elliott; he's two miles out in the country," shouted Arthur, breathlessly, and, without slacking speed, he dashed past them.

Ned looked silently after him till the horse and rider were lost to sight, and then exclaimed—

"Well, I didn't think the fellow had so much pluck! It's one of those wild horses too; I suppose it was the first one he could get. I remember now I saw his sister riding on his own this afternoon."

Katie wisely said nothing, though she felt somewhat triumphant at this practical vindication of her friend's prowess. And Ned, after that, paid much more deference to Arthur's opinions, and did not again complain of him for being "slow," at all events.

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He even actually tried to force himself to study more, though it was, as he said, up-hill work ; and he generally kept himself, before his books at least, for a couple of hours every morning. With his mathematical studies he did succeed in getting interested ; and he even offered to teach Katie algebra—an offer which she willingly accepted, though she did not altogether fancy it for its own sake. Still, the conviction that it was good for Arthur to do it, and the pleasure of mastering a subject which had the attraction of novelty after so long a cessation of study, gave a charm to the algebra lessons they had otherwise wanted ; and Ned found that his pupil was at any rate determined to set him the example of steady application.

The hot weather of July, however, interfered with Katie's capabilities in this direction. Indeed, her strength decreased so rapidly under its effects, and she grew so pale and languid, that her mother's anxiety was renewed, and it was a great relief to her when Dr Elliott proposed that she should go to spend some time at a farm of his in the country, where his wife and children usually stayed during the heat of the summer. It was close to a small inland lake, and both the greater coolness of the climate and the change of air would, he thought, be beneficial to Katie. Ned was included in the invitation, and Mrs Johnstone rejoiced at the opportunity thus offered of removing him from the vicinity of the youths whose intimacy she dreaded so much, and which, in Lynford, it was so difficult for him to shake off.

Katie was delighted at the prospect of real country quarters and staying on a farm, her only drawback being

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the separation it necessitated from her mother, who would not accompany them, and leave her husband alone behind her. However, she promised that should he be called away from home during the time that Katie and Ned were at Birch Farm, she would join them there ; and as Mr Johnstone said he expected to be away for at least a week before long, Katie set out, happy in the hope that her mother would follow.

They had a very pleasant two hours' drive through a rich and well-cultivated country of fine farms, studded with comfortable farm-houses and attached buildings. A thunder-shower during the day had cooled the air, freshened the green of the landscape, and washed the dust from the foliage, so that Nature seemed, as it were, to rejoice after her bath. About seven o'clock they came in sight of a little white farm-house, standing back from the road, and approached by a short avenue of dark evergreens, and beyond it they caught a glimpse of the blue lake, to which the ground behind the house sloped down somewhat abruptly. Mrs Elliott was standing at the gate looking for them with Mary and Willie, the latter of whom, in a state of great excitement, had kept flitting, all the afternoon, between the house and the gate on expeditions of inquiry. Katie got a delighted welcome from him, and he wanted to carry her off the moment she alighted, to see all his favourites, four-footed and feathered. He was, however, reduced to order and sobriety by the announcement that tea was ready ; and at length, when tea was over, he was summarily despatched to bed, with the promise that Katie should be at his service the next morning.

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After they left the tea-table, Ned and the doctor went off to take a stroll about the farm ; but Katie, tired out by the long drive, was glad to lie and rest on a sofa that was prepared for her special accommodation. This had been moved to a little verandah at the back of the house, which looked down upon the lake,—tinted at the time by the rich hues of the sunset, and sleeping in calm loveliness between the broken ground at their feet and the undulating shores on the opposite side. Here and there its calm expanse was concealed by the rich foliage of a noble maple or basswood tree, from which the fire-flies began to gleam out as the daylight faded. Presently, before the evening tints had quite disappeared, the moon's gentle radiance streamed down on the scene, glistening on the foliage, and making the lake glitter like a sheet of burnished silver. Katie had never seen much variety of scenery since she was old enough to remember it—nothing, certainly, that impressed her as so beautiful as this ; and she lay drinking in the beauty around her, and hardly caring to speak, till Mrs Elliott interposed, and insisted that she should go to bed. Then when she lay down in the little attic chamber, so fresh and clean, with the white moonlight streaming in at the open window, she fell asleep with her mind full of happy thoughts, dreaming of quiet waters and green pastures, and with Helen's verse running through her sleeping, as it had done through her waking, thoughts :—

“ If God hath made this world so fair—
Where sin and death abound—
How beautiful beyond compare
Will Paradise be found ! ”



CHAPTER XI.

Sunshine and Shade.

"Why should we fear youth's cup of joy,
If pure, would sparkle less?
Why should the cup the sooner cloy,
Which God hath deign'd to bless?"

HEY were all early risers at Birch Farm. The old farmer, who, with his wife and son, lived always there, rose with the sun—often before it; and as the doctor had to start early for Lynford, breakfast was over before the coolness of the morning had yielded to the growing sultriness of the day. As soon as breakfast was finished, and the short family worship over, without which the doctor never liked to part from his family, Willie conducted Katie to the farm-yard, to introduce her to his various friends there. He kept dragging her eagerly first to one corner and then to another,—explaining "him's a cow," "him's a calf," "them's Willie's chickens,"—to which latter he gave chase in vain. Then he ran off for some crumbs to feed them with, and soon had all the feathered mothers around

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them, with their families of various ages and sizes, much to his and Katie's delight. She was very fond of animals of all kinds, and duly admired the sleek, sleepy cows, standing ruminating in the shade, and the funny, lively calves, as well as the two staid old farm-horses, that on these warm days had almost nothing to do, and who seemed quietly to enjoy the pleasure of going idle. Then they went to the fields to see the sheep and the colts, which latter were at once Willie's delight and terror. Katie liked the sheep best; the quiet matronly ewes, with their patient, wistful faces, and the frolicsome lambs, running races, and tumbling over each other in their play. By this time it was growing warm, and Katie was glad to go in and rest in the cool shady sitting-room, and hear Mary say her lessons for Mrs Elliott, who was busy. Ned soon appeared, glad to seek the same refuge from the heat of the day, and betook himself to a corner with his books, which Katie had taken care to see packed up for conveyance to Birch Farm. She herself had brought with her a good stock of reading—some history, which she had taken up as she got stronger; a volume or two of poetry; and "Kenilworth," which Arthur had lent her on her finishing "Ivanhoe," as well as the "Lady of the Lake," which she hoped to enjoy thoroughly beside the lake at Birch Farm. She was determined, however, to keep a good resolution which she had made, to adhere strictly to the more solid reading in the morning, reserving her light reading for the afternoon and evening; for she had begun to feel that so much of the latter was not good for her, and she was anxious to go on with some of her interrupted studies. So, after Mary's

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lesson was over, and she had sat down to play with her doll, Katie was soon deep in Robertson's "History of Scotland," which she found as interesting as any story.

It was too warm to go out again until after tea, which was always early, and then Ned, who had by this time thoroughly explored the ground, took Katie down by the easiest path to the lake-shore. The banks—shaded by fine forest trees, standing singly or in groups—sloped down pretty steeply ; but by a slightly circuitous route they could get down without much fatigue, and after about a quarter of an hour spent in alternately scrambling and resting, they succeeded, and Katie's delight was overpowering. The crystal waves curled gently in upon the beach of warm sand or smooth pebbles, at her feet ; and the brushwood, and willows, and maples, with which the shore was fringed, hung over the lake till they dipped the ends of their branches in its placid water, which reflected their forms like a mirror. She sat down on a dry mossy log by the bank, to enjoy the scene, and watch the foliage on the opposite shore, brightening in the evening sun ; while Ned picked up pebbles, and taught little Willie how to make them "skip" over the water.

A little canoe lay on the beach, which Ned got into, and made a short trial cruise, before taking in Katie and Willie. It turned out to be in good enough order, Ned declared, for such inland navigation ; and as he assured Katie that he could paddle and manage the canoe quite well, they embarked, and she enjoyed, for the first time, the sensation of gliding over the smooth water. They kept near the shore, to satisfy Katie, who was a little nervous—chiefly



"She sat down on a dry mossy log by the bank, to enjoy the scene, and watch the foliage on the opposite shore, brightening in the evening sun"— *etc.*

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on Willie's account—and watched the waves made by the canoe grow pink and gold and purple in the sunset lights. Just as they landed again, Mrs Elliott herself came down, to carry off Willie and advise Katie to come up before the dew should make the long grass on the banks too wet to go through with comfort. So she returned to her post on the verandah, to enjoy another calm moonlight evening

After this, Katie usually managed to get down to the lake-shore early in the morning, and stay there in the shade with her books till tea-time, to avoid the fatigue of going up the bank in the heat of the day. Ned brought down their simple dinner in a basket; and they had thus a pic-nic, as they called it, every day on the shore. When the afternoons grew a little cooler, they generally went out for a row, exploring the shore, as they glided past, and coming upon many a fairy inlet and tiny cove, full of luxuriant vegetation, and sheltered by rocks covered with brightest mosses and graceful forms, which were to Katie an inexhaustible source of admiring enjoyment. Ned spent a good deal of time in fishing, and kept the table pretty well supplied with the fish in which the lake abounded; but Katie did not enjoy that amusement at all, and stayed on shore when he was so employed. Her books, but especially the "Lady of the Lake," were a source of great delight; and she liked to imagine their lake a tamer Loch Katrine, and to find out for herself a miniature representation of the Trosachs among the boulders on the shore. Then there were wild flowers to be found in the nooks in the woods,—the tiny delicate harebell, and the yellow "*impatiens*," and occasionally a gorgeous cluster of the tall

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scarlet lobelia, while asters without number were beginning to open out their petals to the sun.

Sometimes they varied their afternoons by going with Willie and Mary to look for late raspberries, or for the black finger-berries, which were beginning to ripen. So the days passed quickly by, and glided into weeks; and Katie felt, pervading all the enjoyments with which they were filled, the happy sense that the things which gave her so much innocent pleasure were provided for her by her heavenly Father, and were part of the loving-kindness which her Saviour had purchased for her at so costly a price. The sense of His presence in and through all the beauty He had created, made the world, she thought, seem more beautiful than it had ever appeared before; so far is it from being true that religion—which, if it means anything, means a sense of God's presence, and of our duty to Him, in all things—can give rise to any feeling of gloom, or in any way curtail pure and innocent enjoyment. On the contrary, it is the only thing which can make pleasure pure and innocent, and thus give it its right to be called real enjoyment.

About the middle of August, when the time of their stay at Birch Farm was beginning to draw to a close, Katie's great wish—that her mother should come out and share their pleasure—was fulfilled, as Mr Johnstone had left home for a few days, and she therefore felt, at liberty to come. She enjoyed the fresh country air, and out-door life, and the pretty lake, almost as much as Katie could desire, though she could not be persuaded to trust herself to Ned's navigating skill in the boat, and was very nervous

about Katie when she did so. Katie also found, to her surprise, that she was not so easily tired with the scramble up and down the bank as her mamma was ; but the truth was, she had got accustomed to it, and had also grown stronger during her stay on the farm.

The last two or three days of their stay were rainy, and as the weather seemed a good deal broken, it was not so hard to leave the pretty farm and the beautiful lake as it otherwise might have been. So, with the hope that they would all be there again another summer, they bade Mrs Elliott, and William and Mary, and the old farmer and his wife, good-bye, and drove home to Lynford.

The bright, clear September days passed very rapidly by. Ned's return to College was drawing near, and there was a good deal to be done in renewing his wardrobe and making it sufficient to last for six months without feminine supervision. In this Katie was now strong enough to help Mrs Johnstone very materially, the neat sewing she had learned from Miss Fleming standing in good stead now ; and it was a great happiness to her, as she sat contentedly at work all the forenoon,—at least as long as her mother would allow her to sit steadily at it,—to think that she was doing something that was of real use. Ned had at last betaken himself to his studies in earnest, in prospect of approaching examinations ; so that the mornings were very quiet when he was studying in one corner of the dining-room, and Katie and her mother were working in another. Katie usually kept one of her books of poetry near her work-basket, and learned many verses from the "Christian Year" and Mrs Hemans, which were often

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afterwards an unfailing source of pleasant thought, coming back to her memory "as words in season" of comfort and of counsel.

It was a great trial, however, when the work was all finished; and the last days of Ned's stay at home having arrived, nothing remained but to pack his possessions once more in his trunk, and wait his departure. It was lovely September weather, the trees, as yet, almost unaltered in their green tints,—here and there only a yellowing branch or a stray leaf foretelling the coming "fall,"—when Ned and Katie set out to take their last walk by the river before their long winter's separation. How much may happen before the next meeting is a thought that will always occur when a long parting is close at hand,—not, indeed, so much to the young as to those who have had a longer experience of the sad changefulness and uncertainties of this earthly life; but it was present in Katie's mind with almost the strength of a presentiment, and something of the same feeling sobered Ned's usual flow of spirits and made him unwontedly quiet. To Katie this separation seemed a great deal harder than the former one, not only because she and Ned had been much more constantly together than when he was daily at the Grammar School and she at Miss Fleming's, but also, and still more, from the great development and deepening which her whole nature had undergone during the last year, leading her to feel the painful, as well as the pleasant, more acutely than before—and both in this world of ours are inseparably connected; only in the coming life, for which this one, rightly used, is preparing us, will our developed

susceptibilities for happiness be fully satisfied, and no longer weighed down by suffering, for God himself has told us "there will be nothing to hurt or to destroy in my holy mountain."

"And you will write often, Ned, won't you?" said Katie, as they were returning homewards, rather thoughtfully.

"Oh, yes," said Ned, rousing himself; "let me see—about once a month; that'll be often enough, won't it?"

"O Ned! don't tease now! I'm in earnest. You must write a great deal oftener than you did last winter, and tell me more about things—your friends and the classes, and all you are doing. And Ned," she added timidly, "do try and take a first prize this season; mamma would be so pleased!"

"And you wouldn't care, of course! Well, I'll see about it. I can't undertake impossibilities though, and there are some fellows there that will give me a rather stiff pull to carry off the prize from them. However, I mean to work pretty hard at my mathematics, at all events. The other won't be of much use to me, any way."

"You can't tell what may be of use to you, Ned; but, at any rate, I should think doing one's duty would always be of use, and it must be your duty to learn what is given you at college. And Ned," said Katie timidly, and hesitating a good deal, as they were by this time almost at the gate, "if you would only read the Bible every day, and ask strength to act aright, I am sure you would find it easier to do everything you should do."

She did not dare to say more, and half expected some raillery from Ned about "preaching;" but he made no

reply, and was unusually grave and quiet, and especially kind and attentive to his mother and Katie all the evening.

That last evening, however, came to an end, as all things do, no matter how much we may desire to put drags upon the wheels of time. When, early next morning, Katie went with Ned to the gate to see him off, after his hasty breakfast, she seemed to feel the first chill breath of coming winter in the sharp air, which had already just touched some of the more fragile blossoms left in the flower-beds, bending under a heavy load of dew.

After she had strained her eyes for long to catch the last glimpse of the departing vehicle, and seen it disappear, she retreated hastily to her own room to give way to the fit of crying she had been struggling to repress. It seemed as if there was nothing more of any consequence to do, now that all the work for Ned was over, and she felt as if even force could not compel her to go back to her neglected reading and her other solitary occupations. However, it happily occurred to her that she needed herself to follow the advice she had given to Ned, and accordingly she knelt down, and after earnestly praying for her brother's welfare, as well as for strength to do her own duty, she rose again both comforted and strengthened,—as all who pray in earnest are sure to do,—and went down, comparatively cheerful, to meet her little reading class, whose lessons had been not a little interrupted of late.

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CHAPTER XII.

Sorrow.

Stay with us, gracious Saviour, stay,
While friends and hopes depart;
Fainting, on Thee we wish to lay
The burden of our heart.

ONE afternoon, about a fortnight after Ned's departure, when the trees about Lynford were all decked in their autumn glories of gold and crimson, Jim Egan made his appearance with a face full of important news, and accompanied by Snap, whom he did not usually bring with him in his visits to Katie.

"Well, Jim, what is it?" asked Katie, who saw that something unusual had brought him.

"I'm going away, Miss Katie, so I came to bid you good-bye," said Jim, twisting his cap about in his brown hands.

"Going away! where?"

"There's a carpenter, father knows, up to Beach's Mills, six mile up the river, and he wants a boy; so he said he would take me, and I've to go there to-morrow mornin'."

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"And are you glad to go? You wanted to learn to be a carpenter, didn't you?" asked Katie.

"Oh, yes, Miss, I'm glad enough for that, but I'm sorry to quit learning to read, all the same," said Jim, very awkwardly, for he hated trying to express what he really felt.

"Oh, but you mustn't give it up," quickly replied Katie, "you must go on till you can read well; I'm sure your master will help you, if you ask him. Or perhaps he would let you go to the nearest school for an hour every day, till you can read well, and write a little. You would be more useful then; so, be sure and ask him."

"I will, Miss Katie."

"And, Jim, you must remember, that the chief thing you need learn to read for is, that you may be able to study the Bible, which tells us all about Jesus Christ, who came to die for us, that we might be good, you know. And when He lived in this world, He was, in his youth, a carpenter Himself; so that should encourage you to learn to do your work well, as, Mr Grey says, we may be sure He did, for He did everything well."

Jim listened with open eyes as well as ears. He understood pretty well what she said, for she had always read a little of the Bible to her pupils when they came for their lesson, and had tried to explain it; and he did not forget, in after days, having been told by her that the Son of God had not scorned to work at the humble trade of a carpenter, and had "done His work well."

Jim had, however, something else in his mind to say to her and, after shuffling about for a little while uneasily, he

managed to stammer out, "Please, will you take Snap, Miss Katie?"

Katie was taken aback, and looked surprised, and hesitated; she did not altogether fancy Snap's looks, and had not forgotten his hostility to Jet. But Jim grew more courageous, and continued—

"I'd be so glad if you'd take him, Miss Katie, for your little dog that was killed. I'd better not take him with me, and the poor thing 'ud be lost if I leave him at home."

"Well, Jim, if mamma doesn't object, I'll take him, since you have made up your mind to part with him. But what shall I do if he hurts Daisy?"

"Oh, he won't, Miss, if you show him he's not to. He'll mind what you tell him, if you're good to him. And I haven't let him hunt any cats this long time. Poor Snap, poor fellow," said Jim, bending over the animal to hide his sorrow at parting with his old companion.

"You had better take him back with you now, Jim," said Katie; "you may leave him here in the morning, or get your father to do so, after you are gone. I won't bid you good-bye just now either, for I shall see you again before you go."

"Thank you, Miss Katie," said Jim, making his usual awkward bow as he departed.

That afternoon, Katie went into the village and bought for Jim a neat large-printed Testament, in which she wrote—"To James Egan, from his friend, Katie Johnstone," and also a copy-book, in which she penned, in her best round-hand, a few simple elementary copy-lines, which he might practise from by himself. These she

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took to him that afternoon, and presented them with a few additional parting words of advice.

Snap was brought to his new home the next morning, and Katie had a great deal of trouble in coaxing him to stay. He was not, at first sight, an attractive pet, but he had partaken somewhat of the softening influence which had toned down his master's nature ; and from having been no longer excited to tease and worry whatever came in his way, he had become much more peaceably disposed and tractable. After Katie and he had really become friends, no creature could have been more faithful, and he would have defended her to the death against any possible assailant.

Mrs Egan was a little improved in her domestic habits, and the house was a shade less wretched than it had been when Helen Grey first entered it. Her husband had kept his resolution of sobriety pretty steadily, and he took care not to let her have in her possession any of the money he earned, to spend it on the poison she indulged in ; which yet she would try to procure, whenever she could, by begging from those who gave without inquiring to what use their charity was likely to be appropriated. Now that Jim was gone, Helen thought that the younger ones would be quite as well at school, and to school they were accordingly sent ; but as Katie did not like giving them up altogether, it was settled that they, and some other neglected children who lived near them, should come to her every Sunday for religious instruction, which she tried, not unsuccessfully, to make as interesting, and as far from task-work, as she possibly could. This class

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was her greatest pleasure on Sundays, and the children too were so fond of it that not one of them would ever willingly stay away.

One evening, in the beginning of winter, as dusk was gradually thickening into darkness, Katie, in reaching up to get a book from a high shelf in a bookcase, unhappily missed her footing, and, over-balancing, fell nearly to the ground. In the effort to save herself from falling, she gave herself a strain which brought on such an acute return of the old pain in her back, that she fainted, and for days afterwards could not stir without the intensest suffering. The immediate effects, however, of the strain passed away, after a few days of great care and tender nursing; but the shock had caused a serious relapse, and the slightest over-exertion would bring on such suffering, that whole nights were often spent by her in sleeplessness; which, dreary as they were, would have been drearier still had not the verses of poetry and passages of Scripture which she had learned, come trooping back to cheer her spirit in the lonely darkness.

But a still more serious result was the increasing curvature of the spine, which the doctor thought she might have outgrown, but which was now becoming more perceptible; and her sweet, pale countenance was beginning to show something of the peculiar expression which is often noticeable in the subjects of such an affliction. Mrs Johnstone still hoped against hope; but Helen could not help seeing that her fears of a lifelong trial to poor Katie were only too likely to be realised. There was another sorrow, too, which her friend feared was impending over her. Mrs Johnstone's

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health had always been delicate ; but this fall, her failing strength,—owing greatly perhaps to long-continued anxiety on Katie's account, and partly to a harassing cough which clung to her,—seemed to assume a more serious aspect. She never complained, and manifestly disliked having anything said which could awaken Katie's anxiety. Katie had been so much accustomed, all her life, to see her mother more or less ailing, that her anxiety was not easily aroused ; and Helen saw it would be cruel, considering her physical weakness, to interfere, and forestal the development of God's providence. So, although she did not seek to conceal her own anxiety, she left it to Katie's heavenly Father to prepare her, in His own way, for whatever He might, in this case, have in store for her.

Clara Winstanley's friendship for Katie had not at all diminished, and Katie was occasionally sent for to spend the afternoon at Pine Grove, an invitation which her mother always insisted upon her accepting. The change from her usually quiet and monotonous life, in her own home, which seemed unusually silent, and even sad, since Ned's departure, to the lively, merry family circle of the Winstanleys, still unbroken,—for Arthur had not yet been allowed to go to college,—was of unspeakable benefit to her, both in health and spirits, which were always perceptibly improved after an evening spent there. One fine afternoon in November, when the air was almost as soft and mild as an Indian summer—of which, perhaps, it was a lingering fragment—Clara came over in the carriage, and after taking both Mrs Johnstone and Katie for a drive, carried off the latter to spend the evening with her.

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"We've got a lady staying at our house, Katie," said Clara, as they entered the avenue; "her name is Miss Foster, a friend of mamma's, from Ashby."

"Oh, I wish you had told me before," exclaimed Katie, who, from constitutional shyness, always shrank from meeting strangers.

"Oh, you needn't be afraid of her," replied Clara, laughing. "Arthur says she is great fun—such a gossip; and he goes on drawing her out, with the gravest face imaginable, till Carrie and I can scarcely contain ourselves."

"I hope he won't do it while I am there," said Katie, uneasily; for though she had no intention of making a reflection on her friend Arthur, she did not think this covert ridicule of a visitor quite fair or kindly.

They were by this time at the house, and Katie was at length duly introduced to the lady in question, who scanned her from time to time with a critical eye; and being one of a class of talkers who, in the enjoyment of their favourite propensity, and in their satisfaction with their own penetration, often forget what is due to the feelings of others, she began by and by a series of remarks upon Katie, in another part of the room, to which she had gone to talk with Arthur and Clara. The tone was intended to be a low one, but was unfortunately quite loud enough for Katie to hear all that was spoken.

"Nice-featured child—but dreadfully delicate-looking—and, poor thing!—ahem—decided case of curvature of the spine—isn't it?"

"Oh, no, I hope not," said Mrs Winstanley—not very truthfully, it must be owned; but, much distressed that

such a remark should be made in Katie's presence, and striving to persuade herself that she did not hear it, she hastily turned the conversation to something else.

But Katie had heard, and sat flushing and paling alternately, as the meaning of what had been said forced itself upon her mind. Arthur, observing this, quickly drew her away to another room, on the pretext of looking for a book he wished to show her; and seeing that she was unable to conceal the effect of the careless words, he said eagerly—

“Don't mind anything that Miss Foster says. She is so fond of talking that she will say anything just for the sake of hearing herself speak; and what she says is often the greatest nonsense in the world.”

“But is not that true?” asked Katie, wistfully; for a conviction that it was had forced itself irresistibly upon her.

Arthur was very truthful, and he did not know what to say, for he had heard the same opinion often expressed. At last he said hurriedly—

“I'm sure I don't know. I suppose it would take wiser people than we are to decide. But, Katie,” he added, hesitatingly, and yet impelled by a strong desire to say something to comfort her, and in despair of finding anything else, “I know what Miss Grey would say—that if such a thing were to be, it would not be permitted unless it were best for you.”

Arthur spoke reverently, though more probably from the feeling that such would be Helen's opinion than from its being his spontaneous conviction. It was a new tone for him, however; and Katie was so glad to hear him use it, that she for the moment almost forgot her own trouble.

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The truth of what he said, too, had its effect, and it helped her to conquer herself, and repress at least all outward signs of disquietude, so far as to seem nearly her usual self for the rest of the evening, except that she was a little more silent and less interested than she ordinarily was in what was going on around her. After she was gone, Miss Foster pronounced her a very lady-like, nicely-behaved girl; but Arthur had great difficulty in restraining himself from giving her his opinion of, and rating her roundly for, her own thoughtless animadversions.

As for poor Katie, she spent a nearly sleepless night, and had a bitter fit of crying when she was alone, and there was no further need of self-control, as in the presence of strangers. She conjured up, as we are all, in like case, too apt to do, the many painful possibilities which the idea that had been suggested to her mind might involve; and she was at an age when, even in the absence of personal vanity—of which she had very little—the disadvantages of any conspicuous personal defect, such as might call forth either compassion or ridicule, are very keenly felt. It was a sharp trial for a nature so sensitive as hers; but she took her burden to Him who alone could lighten it, and at last, calmed and soothed, she fell quietly asleep.

She did not dare to speak to her mother about what she instinctively felt would give her as great, if not greater, pain than it did herself; but she confided her trouble to Helen, who, convinced always that truth was best, at once candidly told her that such a thing was not at all impossible, and, indeed, rather more than probable.

“But, dear Katie,” she added, “if it should please God

to send you such a cross to bear, can you not feel sure that it is ordained for your good, and that He will give you strength to bear whatever He appoints for you?"

"Oh, yes," said Katie, with a patient but sad acquiescence, which touched her friend; and then she told her what Arthur had said, adding, "Wasn't it nice of him?"

"Yes, indeed," said Helen; "but I hope he is learning to make that belief his own, as well as to respect it in others. He would be such a useful man, if with all his talent and knowledge he were a Christian in earnest. We must pray that he may become one, Katie," she continued, anxious to turn her thoughts as much as possible towards others, and draw them from herself.

"Yes," replied Katie, softly, "and for Ned too." To which Helen heartily assented.

A few days after this conversation, Mrs Johnstone grew so rapidly and seriously worse as to excite real alarm in Katie, and effectually wean her, for the time, from all thought of her more private affliction. Dr Elliott did his best to alleviate her suffering, and subdue the alarming symptoms, but with little success; and Katie, though she could not give up hope—it is hard, especially for the young, to do so—yet could not help seeing, almost in spite of herself, from the doctor's serious looks, and still more from her mother's more than ordinary wistful, earnest yearning over her, that they both feared the worst. Her mother at last nerved herself to tell her, as gently as she could, that she had no hope of recovery, or even that the end could be long deferred.

"But, mamma," pleaded Katie, still clinging to hope,

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"you may be mistaken, you know. People have often got better when they did not expect it."

"Not when they are as ill as I am now, darling. But, Katie, you must not grieve too much. You can trust the Saviour who is my only stay now; and He will supply all your need. He is the only one to trust to, either for life or death. Remember that, my dear one. Perhaps I haven't remembered it as much as I should have done throughout my life; but do you remember it, dearest."

To this Katie was unable to reply, and no wonder; she could only force back the tears till she found opportunity to give way to her grief without distressing her mother, and she strove still to cling to that hope which, as long as there is life, ever "springs eternal in the human breast."

It is needless to dwell on the sad, yet, in the memory of them, sweet days of watching by the worn-out invalid,—the weary sinking of hope, as the shortening daylight of December seemed to close drearily around the dying year; and the grief when, at last, death came gently like a sleep, and the delicate frame lay in a repose so peaceful that Katie could not believe that the spirit was indeed gone for ever. It is well that the full realisation of that strange, irreversible change comes only upon us by degrees, and that the mind, almost imperceptibly, grows accustomed to what otherwise might crush it altogether.

Ned had been sent for a few days before his mother's death, and was present at the last to share the watching and the grief of his father and sister; for under all his fun, he had strong feelings, and was deeply attached to his gentle

mother. Nor was the remembrance of her anxiety about him lost ; for as he stood by the coffin, taking his last look of the cold, still face he was never to see again, he mentally resolved, under the solemnising influences of the scene, with God's help, to avoid in his future life all that would grieve her, could she know it. He was obliged, however, as soon as the funeral was over, to return to college, where change of scene, and variety of occupations, could not fail soon to divert his mind from the sorrowful recollection of the bereavement that had darkened his home.

It was very different with Katie,—left where everything around her brought back afresh the sense of her loss, and kept alive the aching feeling of desolation in her heart, rendered still keener by her concern for her father, who, partly from the violence of his grief, and partly from the means to which he resorted in order to drown it, was reduced to a state of complete unfitness for any of his usual occupations, and whose physical and mental condition was, to Katie, a source of intense distress.

His grief for his wife's death was doubtless made more poignant by the consciousness, which he could not repress, that his own weakness in yielding to the temptation of his life, had both blighted her happiness and so preyed upon her mind as to wear out the delicate frame before its time. He remembered how bright, and active, and happy, she was when, as his young wife, he first brought her to his Canadian home, and how the light had faded gradually from her eye, and the spirit from her life, as that fatal habit of his, to which he would, at one time, have scorned

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the idea of becoming a prey, gained the mastery over him.

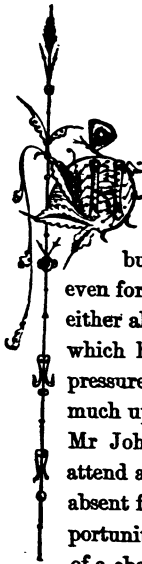
And now, instead of manfully struggling—even for her sake—with the temptation that beset him, all his power of resistance seemed paralysed within him, and he betook himself to the same poisonous fountain of relief and oblivion, as, to his wife's great sorrow, he had done years before, when his pet and favourite Hughie was brought in drowned. Katie would scarcely acknowledge, even to herself, his evil conduct, or the true cause of his great prostration, but it was no small addition to her burden of grief that, instead of hearing in the affliction the call of his Heavenly Father to turn away from sin, he only plunged the more recklessly into that very vice which had marred his usefulness and been the bane of his life.



CHAPTER XIII.

Comfort.

" This, by the ministries of prayer,
The loneliest life with blessings crowds,
Can consecrate each petty care,
Make angels' ladders out of clouds."



ELEN GREY tried, of course, to be as much as possible with Katie, to cheer and comfort her in this season of desolation ; but, as the latter would not leave her father, even for a day, she had unavoidably to be a great deal either alone, or a prey to the depressing influences which his presence created. The long-continued pressure upon her never very high spirits, told so much upon her health, that Helen was glad when Mr Johnstone, who at length roused himself to attend a little to business, found it necessary to be absent for a fortnight, and thus afforded her an opportunity of carrying Katie off, to have the benefit of a change of scene, by staying first a few days with herself, and then with her friends at Pine Grove.

She was almost unwilling, at first, to leave, even for a

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short absence, the house, associated as it was with memories of her mother,—memories, especially, of the preceding winter and spring, when, though suffering physically, she had been, as she now thought, so happy, with that tender loving care always around her.

“Oh, Helen,” she said, the first evening she spent with her friend, “it seems as if I had been so foolish and ungrateful to have been unhappy and discontented about anything when she was alive. Oh, if I could only have it to live over again!”

“My dear Katie, I know that feeling well; I have had it many and many a time since my dear mother was removed from me. We are all often strangely blind to the blessings we have, till they are taken from us, and we see, only too late, the worth that was in them. But I think the true lesson of this experience is, not to spend time and strength in uselessly repining over the loss of blessings we cannot bring back, but rather try to see better, and value more, those we still have left, and use them so that we may not have the same regret when they are taken from us.”

“I wonder,” said Katie, thoughtfully, “whether our friends can know, when they are gone, how much we miss them and value them?”

“It is not easy to see how they could know of our grief for them without its in some degree lessening their happiness,” said Helen; “but one thing papa says he thinks we may be sure of, that Christ communicates to them all that it can add to their happiness to know.” Then, after a little pause, she added, “But I think perhaps one reason why we are told so little about this may be, that we should other-

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wise be thinking more of pleasing them than of the chief motive for doing right, that of following Christ, who should be our only Master."

Katie enjoyed her stay with Helen much more than, in the circumstances, she would have thought possible. The quiet, yet happy, seriousness that pervaded the manse harmonised with her feelings, and they had such pleasant readings and talks together that she shrank from fulfilling her promise to go to Pine Grove, when Clara claimed it. Helen, however, thought the additional change would be beneficial to her, and also that the greater liveliness of the family circle would draw her more out of herself; and as they both felt that the promise to Clara must not be broken, Katie at length set off, reluctantly indeed, and not without extorting a promise from Helen to be as much as she could beside her, during her stay at Pine Grove.

She did not find the visit so formidable as she had expected. Her deep mourning dress, and pale, sad face, somewhat subdued the high spirit of Clara and the juniors the first evening she was there; and she gradually grew accustomed to the lively, mirthful talk around her, which grated so strangely upon her at first. In a day or two the tone of her spirits grew so much stronger and more healthful, that she was able even to enter a little into the pleasures of the children, who were fond of her, and made all sorts of demands upon her sympathy. Every kind of pleasure and amusement was proposed by them for her acceptance; and, in especial, she was offered any number of rides on a tobogan which had been given to Frank and Bessie as a Christmas present, and on which they greatly enjoyed

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sliding down a smooth slope of glittering snow near the house. A severe snow-storm, however, lasting two or three days, put out-door amusements out of the question ; and in the consequent enforced confinement to the house, Katie's story-telling powers were called into requisition, and she had to bring into play every tale or narrative of adventure which she could call up from the corners of her memory. The effort did her a great deal of good ; as indeed every willing attempt to give others pleasure always does, by a strong reflex influence on ourselves ; so that, in this sense, as well as in others, "it is more blessed to give than to receive."

Pine Grove was a pleasant house in winter as well as in summer, and its large light rooms were bright with open fires, and scented at this season with beautiful hyacinths in bloom, and even winter mignonette, which were tended by Mrs Winstanley and Caroline, who were both fond of flowers, and had plenty of money to spend in gratifying their taste for them. Katie thought she had never seen such exquisite flowers as the white and pink and blue clusters, breathing forth such richness of fragrance, and she was never tired of studying and admiring them. Then it was a great pleasure to her to watch Caroline at her flower-painting and embroidery, in which she spent a good deal of time during winter ; indeed, Katie sometimes wondered whether she ever did anything else besides, except practising and reading novels, of which last there was always an abundance there, though most of them were of a kind which Katie's taste, purified by drinking the living water, turned away from instinctively. However, she did

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not trouble herself to judge others ; and it was simply gratifying to her to watch the graceful sprays and rich flowers growing, either on the paper or the canvas, under Caroline's fair hands, sparkling with rings, which Katie admired, as she did everything about her,—with feelings, moreover, without a shade of envy or discontent. In the evenings, too, it was an intense enjoyment to listen to her light, graceful playing, and the silvery cadences of her voice, as she willingly sang any song which Katie asked for ; for she was naturally obliging, and had from the first been remarkably kind to Katie, for whom she cherished a feeling that was half-admiring, half-pitying. Katie, on the other hand, had an almost lover-like admiration for Caroline's attractions, very different, however, from the steady affection and full reliance which attached her to Helen.

Clara continued faithful to the friendship which she had established with her former rival a year before, and would have done anything in her power to add to Katie's happiness, and show her own in having her beside her. Her intercourse with Katie had indeed had no small influence already on her frank, lively character, in which there was much good to develop, though it had now, through Helen's teaching and Katie's society, a higher aim than it had once possessed, or than Caroline even dreamt of. And Arthur was kind and obliging, as he had always been, ready at any time to give up his own pursuits in order to read to Katie anything which he thought likely to please or interest her. His store of information was so large, at least in comparison with Katie's, that they scarcely

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ever entered on one of their numerous discussions but he brought to light some new idea or interesting fact of history, which her quick intelligence eagerly appropriated ; and he was even surprised to see how far she could enter into and appreciate some of the higher subjects which he was studying. Nay, he could not help noticing in her an earnestness and a singleness of purpose which he knew did not exist in himself, and which he felt to be a result of the faith which was her principle of action. Though he was far from adopting it as his own principle of life, he could appreciate its development in her character ; and the conviction that life had responsibilities, not to be met by the mere indulgence of scholarly tastes and the love of learning, had a gradual influence in rousing him from his dreaminess, and giving a deeper tone to his moral nature.

One afternoon, when the drifting snow-storm outside had just subsided, and the bright March sunset was gleaming golden through the great rifted grey clouds, Arthur stepped into the cheerful, cosy room where the girls sat working by the fire, flushed and excited with his long toilsome walk through the snow from the village, to which he had gone, to save his tutor, who was in delicate health, the labour of walking to him.

“Are you cold, Arthur ?” said Clara, as he came up to enjoy the warm glow of the fire ; “you look warm enough.”

“It isn’t exactly the warmest thing in the world, breasting the sharp wind to-day ; though I haven’t been taking it easy

‘The way was long, the night was cold,
The minstrel was infirm and old,’”

he added, in a tone which made them laugh.

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"O Arthur!" exclaimed Clara, "do sit down now and read us that; it is so long since I heard it, and we have all been working ourselves stupid for want of you to read to us. Have you ever read the 'Lay of the Last Minstrel,' Katie?"

Katie had only read some extracts from it, so she eagerly seconded Clara's request; and Arthur willingly sat down to read to them what was one of his favourite poems, and much of which, indeed, he knew by heart; so that, as the daylight gradually stole away, he went on quite easily by the aid of the red firelight, and needed not to disturb the enchanted atmosphere of the poem by ordering lights. It was just that sort of wild mingling of the romantic and the ancient and the supernatural which, as it marks this composition, was most congenial to Katie's natural taste; and she listened, with eyes fixed on the flickering firelight, and almost seemed to see the various scenes and actors, and the knightly array of weird forms, so vividly called up by the magic touch of the minstrel. After tea, Arthur supplemented his reading by bringing out some fine Scotch views and photographs, among which were "fair Melrose," and other illustrations of the scenery of the poem. Katie admired them extremely, and studied them so long that Arthur protested she must have learned them by heart.

"I wonder if all those places are really as beautiful as they are represented here," she said.

"They ought to be more so," replied Arthur, "for, of course, you don't see the colouring there. But I suppose the artists have idealised them a little, as they call it—that is to say, altered them slightly so as to make prettier pic-

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tures of them. I hope some day to see them all for myself, however. Shouldn't you like too? I should never be satisfied if I didn't."

"Yes, I should like it, certainly," said Katie; "but I can be quite satisfied without it. It is good that it is so," she added, smiling, "as I am not likely to have the chance."

"Well, but there is some pleasure in thinking about it, and looking forward to it, even if the time never did come," persisted Arthur.

"I think I would rather look forward to something better, which we may all have," said Kattie, softly. "But I suppose I think more about that now since mamma died."

"What is it you mean exactly?" asked Arthur.

Caroline's music prevented their conversation from being heard, or Katie would not then have ventured on that ground.

"I mean the promise which is such a comfort when every thing looks dark: 'Thine eyes shall see the King in His beauty; they shall behold the land that is very far off.' I was reading it this morning, and that made me think of it now."

This remark was distasteful to Arthur, and he did not pursue the conversation. It annoyed him a little that Katie's mind always would take such an unearthly turn when he wanted to discuss other matters with her; yet he did not forget what she said, and even thought of it afterwards.

It was impossible that, with so many things to make it pleasant, Katie should not have enjoyed her visit at Pine Grove; and perhaps the only day she did not thoroughly

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relish it was the Sunday. She went, of course, with her friends to the Church of England, which they attended, and she was very much impressed with the solemn beauty of the service ; but it pained her to see the carelessness with which the rest of the day was regarded. Caroline either fell asleep on the sofa, under pretence of reading, or kept up some idle conversation with her mother and sister about the merest trivialities, among which was sure to be included any peculiarities of dress or demeanour which they had observed during the morning service. Katie could not help wondering, indeed, how they could have noticed so much, compatibly with any degree of attention to the ostensible object of their presence in the house of God. Arthur used to shrug his shoulders impatiently at the "clattering," as he called it, and would steal away from them to read in peace by himself—as Katie, too, sometimes did, whenever she could escape with decency ; but it was generally some light secular magazine or novel that she saw in his hands. Indeed, there was such a scarcity of interesting Sunday reading in the house, that this was hardly surprising in one who, as yet, would have considered it a weariness to read the Bible steadily for any length of time.

"What are you looking so discontented about, Katie," he asked, on the second Sunday evening of her stay, as they sat near the dining-room fire, the others having one by one dropped off to sleep.

"Was I looking discontented?" asked Katie.

"Yes ; I should take the expression of your countenance to mean that you thought us all a set of heathens, and were grieving over the way we behave on Sunday."

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Katie coloured at this rather free translation, certainly, of what had been passing in her mind ; but she could not deny that something of the kind had occupied her, and she felt it would not be candid to evade it ; so she said, after a slight hesitation—

“I do think it’s a great pity that you don’t get more good out of your Sundays.”

“Well, I think I get considerable good out of them. Those girls gossip and sleep half the time, and do waste it dreadfully ; but I have been reading hard all afternoon, and have got a great deal of information out of an interesting scientific article on electricity.”

Katie looked perplexed. She did not feel equal to pronouncing judgment on scientific articles, or to drawing lines of distinction, but she had a strong conviction on the matter ; so she replied—

“I don’t know much about electricity, but I do think that is not the sort of reading Sunday was given for. It’s a day of rest, you know, from all sorts of work.”

“Well, then I should have been better employed in sleeping, or reading a brown-paper novel ?”

“No, that would not be the right kind of rest either,” said Katie, smiling, “and you don’t think so.”

“How do you know that ? But what is the right kind of rest, then ?”

“I can feel it, but I don’t know whether I can explain it,” said Katie. Then she went on more slowly, “It is the rest that Christ speaks about giving to the weary and heavy-laden, and that makes us forget about our ordinary cares and worries, and gives a sort of new strength for the rest of

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the week, just as one feels when one has passed a good night's sleep after being very tired."

"And how do you get that sort of rest?"

"Oh! by going to church, and reading the Bible, and other books that explain the Bible or put us in mind of what it teaches, or by thinking about these things, and by prayer."

She hesitated before adding the last, and said it only because she disliked avoiding, from false shame, a full answer to the question that had been asked.

"Well," said Arthur, "I don't think I ever got so practical an idea before of Sabbath-keeping. It always seemed to me more an arbitrary sort of thing than anything else. But if the principle you and Miss Grey go upon is the right one, there ought to be a good deal in what you say. Perhaps I'll try some time how it works."

"I wish you would," said Katie. There was not much in the words, but the tone was very earnest, and Arthur understood it.

Her visit had been prolonged from a week to a fortnight, as Mr Johnstone continued longer away than he had expected; but when sure of his return, Katie made ready to leave, and resisted resolutely all the kind solicitations to remain a little longer with which she was pressed. It was no small trial to her, in her inmost heart, to leave the bright and pleasant surroundings at Pine Grove, and go to take up again the burden that was awaiting her in her lonely home, where, for the first time in her life, there was no longer a mother's voice and smile to welcome her back. Martha, who had long taken the principal management of

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household matters, could have made her father comfortable enough, as far as these went, but Katie felt that her post of duty was beside him, and that to leave him alone in the solitary house, even for a day, would be unfaithfulness to her mother's dying charge,—to “do all she could for papa.”

So she was there when he returned to welcome him, to a room as cheerful as a bright fire and care and thoughtfulness could make it, and she was rewarded by a very kind greeting and a marked disposition on his part to make the evening pleasant by talking more genially to her than he had for long done. He was evidently much the better for the change of scene and ideas which his journey had given him, and for the necessity he had been under of compelling himself to attend to the business he had to transact. He did not, as Katie feared, resume the habit of seeking relief from painful thoughts in stimulants, which created only a temporary oblivion, at the expense, too, of progressive degradation. He remained after this much more at home, especially in the evenings, seeming sensible that his duty to Katie required him not to leave her solitary, and gratefully recognising her thoughtful care for his comfort. She rejoiced over the change with trembling, hardly daring to hope that it would continue, and feeling that it was another instance of the rough wind being stayed in the day of the east wind.

A new and deeply interesting subject of thought occupied her mind as the spring drew on. She wished to become a partaker of the Holy Communion at its approaching commemoration in Mr Grey's church. Mr Grey did not usually encourage any of his flock to come

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forward to the ordinance while so young as Katie was, lest they should do so without a due sense of the solemnity of the vows they were taking upon them ; but in Katie's case he had no such fear, the peculiarity of her circumstances and her natural thoughtfulness having given her mind a development at least two years in advance of her age. He had conversed with her on the subject, and had drawn her out as fully as her natural shyness and modesty would admit ; and he told Helen how much pleased he had been with the humility, and knowledge of truth, and simplicity of faith which he found in her. "She is one of Christ's little ones, Helen," he said, "and He has been teaching her Himself."

"Yes, indeed," said Helen, tears coming to her eyes ; "I often wonder at the things she says,—far in advance of me, who used to be her teacher !"

But much as Katie wished to enjoy the privileges connected with the observance, in obedience to His own dying command, of the rite that commemorates our Saviour's death, she did not approach it in any spirit of over-confidence, but almost shrank, as the time approached, from the responsibility which she felt was attached to the solemn profession she was about to make. Helen encouraged her by reminding her that she had already in her heart taken Christ for her Saviour, and that in coming to His table, she was only outwardly ratifying her heart's choice and her promise to be His. "And you can surely trust Him for the strength to go on, can you not ? The Lord will perfect all that concerneth you. He doesn't leave that for us to do."

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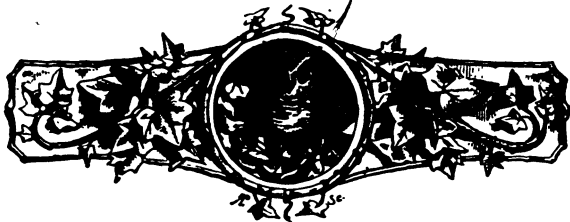
"No," said Katie, "it would be hard for us if He did. It is only myself I am afraid of; when I forget His strength, and try to go on in my own."

"Well, he never lets us do that long without showing us the folly of it. Trust Him, Katie, that He can take care of His own; and His own are just those who come to Him," added Helen, anticipating the thought which she saw was on Katie's lips.

The Communion was to be on the following Sunday, and the Friday previous was spent by Katie at the Manse, in going to church with Helen, and in quiet reading and talk. It was a lovely, warm spring day,—the crocuses already opening their yellow cups in Helen's garden,—and though the memory of her mother still kept up an ever-present sense of loss in Katie's heart, the day was to her full of a calm, tranquil happiness, that many in far more prosperous outward circumstances might have envied. And on the Communion Sunday, a day which might have served as the original of George Herbert's

"Sweet day, so cool, so calm, so bright,"

she thankfully partook of the Feast, feeling strongly the blessedness of the Communion, not only with the Master himself, but with the beloved ones who had gone to enjoy His presence for ever in the courts above. It was truly a source of refreshment and reviving to her, as it will be to all who approach it in a humble and childlike spirit, and she went on in the strength of it for many days to come. It was well that she could find this nourishment in it, for a new trial was impending which would task her utmost resources.



CHAPTER XIV.

A Sudden Shock.

" Why should I murmur, since the sorrow
Thus only longer-lived would be ;
Its end will come, and may to-morrow,
When God has done His work in me.
So say I trusting, as God will,—
And trusting to the end, hold still."

TIME, that wears through the seasons whether rough or smooth, had brought round the day when Ned was expected home from college. As on the preceding occasion, his father went in the morning to meet him at Ashby and bring him home in the evening, and Dr Elliott, who had to attend a consultation in the little town, went with him. Katie spent most of the day in various preparations for her brother's return, and she and Martha did their best to make the house as bright and comfortable, and the substantial tea as inviting, as their ingenuity could devise, in order to render the home-coming as pleasant as possible in circumstances where so much would be missed. When seven o'clock arrived, and the lighted lamp and

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the well-spread tea-table stood all ready for the travellers, and the fire was burning its brightest, Katie began to listen for approaching wheels ; but, determined to control her restlessness, she resolutely took up some work and stitched for a while without betraying distraction. Gradually, however, the progress of the needle slackened as one quarter of an hour passed away after another, and still they did not come. Then the fire needed to be attended to ; then she went to listen at the window, and presently Martha came in to express her wonder at the non-arrival, and to press Katie to take her own tea by herself without waiting any longer. Katie could not, however, bear to sit down alone, and, indeed, could not, as she said, have taken any then at any rate ; and so another hour passed. She went out to the door, at last, to listen, as if the listening would bring them. A light, warm rain was falling, and she could hear in the stillness the rushing of the river and of the water in the mill-dams, but no wheels. By this time her head ached, and she felt faint from excitement, so she yielded to Martha's entreaties so far as to swallow a cup of nearly cold tea, and then was obliged, from exhaustion, to lie down on the sofa, where she soon dropt off into an uneasy slumber. A sudden bark of Snap's awoke her from a painful dream, with a dread of some impending danger to Ned and herself, when she heard wheels stopping at the gate. Before she could fully recall her confused senses the door opened, but instead of Ned or her papa, Dr Elliott stood before her. She was startled by the expression on his kind and usually cheerful face, and with a chill fear at her heart exclaimed, " Oh, Dr Elliott, where is Ned ? "

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"Here, and will be in, in a minute;" but she saw there was something more.

"And papa?" she anxiously inquired, in a faint voice that could utter no more.

She never knew how Dr Elliott made her understand the fatal tidings; she only knew her father was dead, taken away in some sudden, unaccountable manner; and then she had a distracted recollection of seeing Ned's face, white as a ghost's, and miserable, and of hearing a confused noise of heavy feet in the passage; and after that all was dark and silent, and it was a good many hours before she fully awoke to anything like a conscious realisation of what had happened.

Mr Johnstone had been standing in the doorway of the little hotel at Ashby, after having met his son and transacted most of his business. He had been conversing with an acquaintance, and was just turning to go in, when he fell heavily to the ground. Ned was instantly by his side, and Dr Elliott, who was only a few doors off, was immediately summoned, but only to confirm what those present already suspected, that life was extinct. "Heart disease," said Dr Elliott to a friend who stood by. "I examined him a month ago, and told him that he might go off at any moment."

Those who were fond of tracing causes further, especially where their neighbours were concerned, asserted that the affection of the heart which had then cut him off in the prime of life, proceeded from the habits of drinking in which he had indulged, and it must be confessed that there was much to justify the opinion.

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It was some consolation to Katie, in the terrible shock, to know that he had at least had a warning, and to reflect, moreover, on the change of his conduct since that warning had been given, which seemed to assure her that it had not been in vain. She was glad now to recall what she had observed in him of late,—the instances of thoughtful kindness on his part, which had gratified her so much at the time, his unwonted seriousness of demeanour, his willingness that she should end the day with reading of the Scripture, the times when she had seen him reading it for himself, his accompanying her to church, and the solitary visits she knew he had paid to her mother's grave. In the absence of anything more definite, she fondly dwelt upon these tokens of the repentance which she hoped had been his. But it was, at best, a painful subject of thought; how different from the blessed certainty she had felt about her mother! The final summons had come to him with awful suddenness; whether it had found him "watching," who could tell?

Mr Grey and Helen took Ned and Katie home with them immediately after the funeral, leaving Martha to take care of the house until permanent arrangements were decided upon. The shock she received from her father's death, in its peculiar circumstances, had prostrated Katie much more than her grief for her mother, both because she had not the same pressing need as then of exerting herself for others, and because of the unspoken weight upon her mind regarding him, which prayed more upon her health and spirits than any merely physical ailment.

But another source of anxiety now opened upon her, and

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one, too, burdened with an entirely new sense of care. Neither she nor Ned had ever known any particulars of their father's pecuniary affairs beyond the fact, of which, from their mother's anxious economy, they were well enough aware, that there was never more money to spend than was absolutely needed for the most necessary expenses. His only executor, who had been his confidential business friend, was Mr Wykeham, a lawyer in Ashby, and a conversation which Ned had with him, a few days after the funeral, revealed a state of things for which they were totally unprepared. It then seemed that Mr Johnstone, in order to supplement the uncertain resources of his professional income, which, in consequence of the want of confidence in him produced by his unsteady habits, was far from being what it might have been, had entered upon various speculations in land and lumber, for the carrying on of which he had been obliged to borrow to a very considerable extent. Had he been spared for some years to bring them to a conclusion, he might have realised a handsome profit, but, in the state in which they were now left, nothing could be done with them, except to transfer them to others as advantageously as possible, or else to wind them up at once. On the most favourable calculation, after disposing of all the saleable property which Mr Johnstone had left, there would still be several hundred pounds of debt remaining; a prospect which filled Ned with dismay, to whose mind, fresh and uncontaminated by contact with the world, the very idea of debt presented itself as something terrible and degrading. Mr Wykeham proposed to make an immediate composition with the

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creditors, who, he thought, would be disposed to give an allowance for the present maintenance of himself and his sister. There was providentially, however, he told him, a small sum in reserve, originally inherited by Mrs Johnstone, and settled finally upon her and her children, and this, the lawyer thought, would, if economically used, supply their absolute wants until Ned should be able to provide for himself.

He came back to Lynford, from this interview, unusually quiet and thoughtful, and when he and Katie were alone, he explained all their circumstances to her, feeling that it was a matter which concerned her as much as himself, and that it would not be right to leave her in ignorance of it for the sake of sparing her the present pain it would cause her. And it did give her great pain, though she tried as far as possible to conceal it, not because it would reflect on herself—she scarcely thought of that, but because she felt as if it involved some disgrace to her father's memory; a feeling which she could not quite get rid of, though Ned took care to explain that, as the speculations might reasonably have been expected to turn out well in the natural course of things, he could not be blamed for borrowing money which he had no reason to doubt he would soon be able fully to repay.

"And what can be done?" she anxiously inquired.

"Mr Wykeham says we must make a composition with the creditors, that is, get each of them to take partial payment of the debt instead of the whole, and then obtain a discharge from them, and have the matter ended. He thinks they would allow us something besides to live on till I am able to start life and earn somewhat for myself."

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"Do you mean then," asked Katie, "that they are never to be paid all papa owed them?"

"Well, how can it be helped? There is nothing to pay them with in full."

Katie thought for a little while in silence, then she said resolutely—

"No, they could not be paid just now, and you cannot promise them what you haven't got; but Ned, if I were you, and had the prospect of being able some day to make money by working for it, I would promise myself, that just as soon as I could earn it, they should be paid all they have lent."

She spoke with a determination of tone very unusual for her, and weak as she was, Ned was struck with the energy of her voice, and the flush which excited feeling had brought to her pale cheek.

He had thought himself of what she proposed; indeed it was impossible for a youth of his thorough honesty of nature not to think of it; yet it seemed a little hard, a little more than could justly be expected from him, to have to begin life with such a drag upon him, and he needed all Katie's firm decision as to what was right, to convert his thought into a full-formed purpose, from which he would have been glad to escape in any way that would have satisfied his conscience. So he still tried whether nothing could be said on the other side.

"But, you know, Katie, it is rather hard on me, who had nothing to do with borrowing the money, to have to work, and work, year after year, just to refund it, and by the time I can possibly be able to pay them, the people will

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most likely have forgotten all about it, and probably have got over their loss and their need of the money."

"That is not your affair, at all events, Ned. You have only to do what is right. Suppose these speculations had succeeded, and papa had lived some years longer, and made a great deal of money, wouldn't you have thought it very unjust if you had been prevented from inheriting it?"

"Of course," unwillingly admitted Ned, who saw quite well what was coming next.

"Well then, I think, as you often say, it's a poor rule that won't work both ways. You see, in that case, you would have had the advantage of the money that was borrowed. And as it would have been unjust to be prevented from inheriting money if there had been any, isn't it just to inherit the responsibility of paying the debts too?"

Ned did not reply to this; he saw the force of the argument, and could not controvert it. Presently Katie said, more earnestly—

"Oh, Ned, if I only were able to do anything to earn money, I would work so hard to clear off everything, so that no one would have it in his power to say he had been wronged by papa. I am sure you never could be comfortable yourself in the possession of anything, if you had the feeling that there were people who could say that your father had, even unintentionally, deprived them of what was justly theirs."

"No, Katie, I'm sure I should not; I think myself you are in the right about it. But there would be no occasion for you to work, even if you were likely to make

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anything worth while," he said, with a smile, "for surely, if I have health and strength, it won't be such very hard work for me to make as much as would clear off what of the debt will be left. I'll see Wykeham again, and tell him to do all he can to get as much cleared off as possible now, and I suppose you and I can manage well enough with mamma's money, so that we shouldn't want any allowance."

"Oh, no!" said Katie, "I wouldn't have it, if you can possibly get your education finished without it."

Mr Grey and Helen, who were taken into consultation, highly approved of the resolution Ned and Katie had come to, and on the following day Ned saw Mr Wykeham, and desired him to give the creditors an assurance of immediate payment of as much of their claims as it might turn out there was property to meet, and to inform them of his own firm intention of seeing them fully satisfied as soon as he should be in a position to do so.

Mr Grey also insisted that his house was to be the home of both Ned and Katie for the present, and that Katie was to consider herself his daughter until Ned should be able to take her to a home of his own. "And after that," he added kindly, "if I live and she will stay."

Helen added her own warm assurances of the great pleasure it would be to her to have Katie with her always; and the latter, knowing that she could fully trust the sincerity of both, gratefully accepted their invitation, resolving in her own mind that she would endeavour to be of as much use to them as possible, though the kindness was one which she felt she never could repay. Martha

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was to be taken in too, to her great satisfaction, as the Greys' own servant was about to leave them. Helen laughingly observed to Katie that even if her coming had been an inconvenience, instead of a pleasure, which it was, the advantage of getting Martha, whose efficiency and faithfulness as a servant she so well knew, would more than counterbalance it, as it would give her so much more time to attend to her own multifarious duties. "Between you and Martha, I shall have nothing to do at home at all," she said, when Katie had been enumerating the things she wished to be left to her management.

Snap and Daisy were of course also included in the transfer, and soon got accustomed to their new home. The former, indeed, seemed to find the warm stone door-step a very comfortable resting-place and tower of observation, where he could lie in the sun, and terrify any adventurous chickens who came round from the yard to scratch up the seeds that had been newly sown in the little flower-garden.

Ned's prospects and outward career were destined to be a good deal modified by this change in their circumstances. His father had wished him to become a lawyer, so that he might eventually take him into business with himself, but Ned's own inclinations had never been in favour of it, so that he was now desirous of relinquishing it, and with it, the idea of completing his regular University course, which would only, as he said, be taking up time, now so valuable to him. His talents pointed chiefly in the direction of mathematics, and his tastes were in favour of an out-door life, so that the profession which had most charms for him,

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as well as the most likely one, was that of an engineer or surveyor. Mr Grey advised him, if he had made up his mind to it, to begin at once studying for it privately, until he should find out some competent professional man with whom he might enter on its practical study. In the meantime, by Mr Grey's advice, he wrote to his father's only surviving brother in Scotland, the only near relative he now had, for on his mother's side there were none but distant ones. Mr Johnstone had kept up very little communication with his brother; but Mr Grey thought that it was only right that the latter should be informed of his death and of the circumstances in which his family had been left by it, hoping that as the uncle was a man of some influence and property, he might be able to do something to forward his nephew's prospects.

Ned, for his part, expected to be able to defray the expenses of his own preparation for business, and to supply the very small personal needs of Katie, from the sum of money left them by their mother, which, though comparatively small, would, he thought, with rigid economy, last until he should, as he hoped, be in receipt of an independent income.

Mr Winstanley was one of his father's creditors, though not to a very large amount. When informed of Ned's determination, he warmly applauded it, as being highly creditable to his honour and honesty, and when he met Ned a day or two afterwards, he told him that he was willing to cancel that portion of his claim, nearly half, which could not be met in the present appropriation of the property. Ned and Katie thought this a remarkable in-

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stance of generosity in a man who was considered to be pretty sharp in looking after his own ; they did not know, though perhaps Katie suspected, how much Arthur's representations had had to do with it, nor, moreover, that it was money which Mr Winstanley had long regarded as almost hopelessly lost.

"I am glad the boy has acted so well," observed Mr Grey to his daughter, after they had been expressing their satisfaction with Mr Winstanley's generosity. "It is a disgrace to a Christian country, the system of legalised robbery that goes on, when men borrow, with their eyes open, for speculating purposes, to an extent far beyond what they have any reason to think they shall be able to repay, trusting that when the worst comes to the worst, as it is sure to do sooner or later, they will extricate themselves clear out of it by making an assignment and getting a discharge. And then, however much money they may make after their second start, in nine cases out of ten, they never even think of the just debts that remain unpaid, and of the suffering they have caused, and may still be causing, those whose imprudence, or inexperience, or perhaps friendly desire to oblige, beguiled them into entrusting them with what they could yet ill afford to lose. In many cases it's just as bad as, or worse than, when a young man robs his employer to retrieve his losses at the gambling-table, hoping to pay it back, as one of my old college companions did and thought, and was transported for it, poor fellow, while these men escape with impunity. Of course I would not venture to say as much to Ned, lest he should think I was reflecting on his father, for I don't believe he meant to do

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anything of that kind, and Mr Wykeham told me that when he got Dr Elliott's warning about the state of his health, he was very anxious to sell his interest in one of his best speculations in order to put things a little straight, and was only prevented because he could not at the time do it advantageously."

The Winstanleys showed no diminution of their kindness to Katie. Clara had done everything that affectionate regard could suggest to cheer and comfort her, and when, as the warm weather came on, the languor and prostration, from which she had never recovered, became still more noticeable, Mrs Winstanley insisted on the execution of a project she had for some time had in view,—that of taking Katie, with her own family, on a long-planned visit to the sea-side. Helen thought the scheme an excellent one, and would not hear of Katie's declining it, which she was strongly disposed to do on the score of the expense it would entail upon her friends. But when Helen represented to her that it would give Mrs Winstanley as great pleasure to do the kindness as it could to Katie to accept it, so she overcame her scruples, and yielded, with no small delight in her heart at the prospect of seeing so much that would be new to her, and especially the sea, of which she had so often dreamed and heard both from her mother and Mrs Duncan. The only alloy to her pleasure was, that Helen was not going too. Helen would certainly have liked it very well, had the trip been practicable for her; though, much more than for herself, she coveted it for her father, who was feeling the inroads of age and the prostration due to unremitting work, and whom the sea air and the change would have

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braced and invigorated. But as, with their slender income, the expense put it out of the question, she wisely turned away her thoughts from the subject, feeling that she could trust the Disposer of their lives with this as with every other interest. She told Katie, smiling, that her turn would perhaps come next, and as, at any rate, she wished to visit her sister in the autumn after Katie came back, it would not have done for her to be away from home so long; and she took fully more pleasure than Katie herself did in preparing her outfit; and she assisted her to remodel her slender stock of dresses, so as to make them look as well as they could, for Katie was determined not to spend a penny more in this or any other way than was absolutely necessary. Helen, indeed, had some trouble in prevailing upon her to procure the additions to her wardrobe which she deemed needful, and Mrs Winstanley considerably sent her a present of a neat dark-gray travelling-dress, made as nearly as possible similar to Clara's,—a thing Katie would never have thought of ordering for herself.

The evening before they were to start, Helen accompanied Katie as she went to say good-bye to her friend Mrs Duncan. The day had been very sultry, but in the evening a cool breeze had sprung up, which enabled Katie with less fatigue to take a longer walk than she was usually equal to now. She had not been in that vicinity, which was that of her old home, since the house had been shut up and the furniture sold; and its deserted, desolate appearance, as she passed it, awaking a host of dear old associations, did not fail to bring tears to her eyes, though Mrs Duncan's

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cheerful, kindly greeting soon dispelled the shadow that had come over her face.

"I'd like well a glint o' the bonnie blue sea, mysel'," said Mrs Duncan, as she was bidding her good-bye; "I used to be aye glad to come in sight o' it again when I had been for awhile away, as at the sight and hearing o' what used to seem like an old friend, with its deep solemn murmur aye sounding in our ears. Well, it doesna much matter, for though we are told there will be "no more sea" in the country we are looking for, still there will be no longing unsatisfied there, we may be sure o' that! And much good may the sea do you, my dear, and I hope you'll come back a hantle rosier and stronger than you go away!"

"Helen," said Katie, as they slowly walked homewards in the dusk, "I feel as if I were selfish in having so much pleasure at the thought of going when you are not, and yet I do so wish you were going too."

"It wouldn't be selfish, it would be ungrateful, if you were not to enjoy as much as you can a pleasure God puts in your way. As it is not put in mine at present, it cannot be best for me, just now at any rate. But I shall enjoy your letters while you are away, and think how much you will have to tell me when you come back."

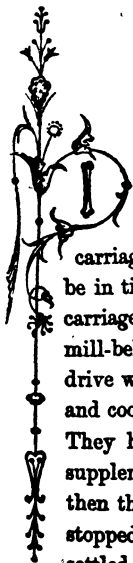
"Yes, indeed," said Katie, "and I'll try and remember everything to tell you about. And you and Ned will both write to me about all that is going on here."



CHAPTER XV.

The Sea-Side.

" He sat at the feet of Nature
In love and wonder meek ;
Had he then learned to listen,
Or had she learned to speak ! "



It was a lovely morning in the beginning of August when the travellers set out. They were to drive to Ashby in the Winstanleys' carriage, to take the train there, and in order to be in time they had to start very early. When the carriage called at the Manse to take up Katie, the mill-bells were just ringing for six o'clock, and the drive was thus accomplished while the air was fresh and cool, and the heavy dew still subdued the dust. They had time, while waiting at the station, to supplement their necessarily hasty breakfast, and then the train came in sight, gave its shrill whistle, stopped, just allowed them time to get comfortably settled in their places, and was bearing them away out of sight of the Ashby steeples, before Katie could

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realise that they were really off into what, to her, was an unknown world.

She had scarcely ever, since she was old enough to remember, been out of Lynford, at least to any considerable distance, and every mile of the journey therefore disclosed some object of interest quite new to her. They had fine weather during the whole of the journey, a long one from our Western Canada to the seaboard. It would scarcely be possible fully to describe Katie's intense enjoyment of the beautiful sail down the broad St Lawrence, with its ever-shifting panorama of lovely islands and white foaming rapids. Montreal, with its imposing mountain background, its masses of buildings, lofty towers, and forest of shipping, powerfully impressed her inexperienced imagination, which had never before been able to picture what a great city was like ; and as they rattled along over the hard streets and between the tall houses, to the hotel where they were to spend the night, she sat in perfect silence, gazing with excited interest on the crowds of passers-by, and the other characteristics of the scene, all so new to her untravelled senses.

They spent the next forenoon in visiting the cathedral and other sights of interest, and started in the middle of the day for Island Pond, thinking the whole journey to Portland too fatiguing, especially to Katie, to be performed throughout in a single day. The excitement seemed for the time to have given her new energy, but for that very reason it was the more necessary to be careful, lest the demand it was making on her strength should tell upon her seriously afterwards. Pleasant as was their route during the afternoon, among the blue windings of the St Francis and the

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Richelieu, she was almost glad when they came to their evening stopping-place, where, however, she soon lost the sense of fatigue in refreshing slumber. She was called almost before daylight next morning, to be ready for the early train. Looking from the high window of her room, she beheld in its quiet, unearthly beauty, what seemed to her more like a dream than a reality,—the lake lying still and glassy below, studded with its fairy isles, and the early haze, as it rolled away at the moment, lending an ideal grandeur past conception to the hills that rose behind against the rosy and golden tints of the early morning sky. However, she had not long leisure to admire the exquisite picture, for Clara and she were hurried down by the warning signal almost before they were ready. Then there was another delightful forenoon's journey among the pine-covered Green Mountains of Vermont, and after that among the grand rugged summits of the White Mountains, which, much as they delighted Katie, disappointed her just a little in the particular of height, though this, perhaps, is a general experience with those who are new to mountain scenery. At last, the train, leaving the mountains behind, brought them once more into populous regions, and, suddenly, at length there flashed out upon their gaze the broad harbour of Portland, its blue breezy waters dotted with snowy sails of all shapes and sizes, and, seen for a moment, looming away in the blue distance, the sea! Portland itself is not on the open seaboard, but the party, none of the junior members of which had ever been before in the "forest city," found plenty to admire in the fine avenues of stately

trees which embower the streets, and the imposing residences, with their tasteful grounds, which they passed in the course of their short drive through it.

They had still a further stage, though a short one, to traverse by rail, before they arrived within driving distance of their destination, and it was only when they were approaching their intended quarters, that Katie had, from the carriage windows, at last a full view of "the great and wide sea," stretching away, in its blue expanse, into the infinite distance.

"Well, Katie, does it satisfy your expectations?" asked Arthur, who himself could fully sympathise with the feeling that crimsoned her cheek and made her eyes sparkle so brightly as she leaned forward and gazed out intently.

"I will tell you by and bye. I can't take it all in yet," she said, with a smile; and, indeed, she never cared to speak when any grand or beautiful object was exciting her admiration, at least on the first occasion.

They arrived just as the gong of the hotel was sounding the summons to tea, and groups of people were approaching from various quarters, and hastening in. After hurriedly changing their dusty dresses, they gladly went in to the refreshing meal, which looked very inviting in its sea-side abundance of fish, fruit, rolls, and biscuits of every variety, that covered the long tables in the large light dining-saloon, whose windows commanded a full view of the ocean. Katie thought she had never enjoyed a tea so much, and was quite unconscious of the scrutiny the new-comers underwent from their neighbours at table, and of the half-pitying glances which were directed to herself.

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As soon as tea was over, disclaiming all idea of fatigue, which she was still too excited to feel, she went down to the beach with Arthur and Clara, who were as anxious as herself to be closer to the waves, and feel their feet really on "the sands," which, left by the receding tide, were at the time solid and firm as a marble pavement. Out of consideration to Katie, the others resisted the disposition to have a run, or even a waik, on the tempting surface, and so, sitting down in an old boat that lay stranded high and dry above the tide-mark, they resigned themselves to listen to the mysterious muffled roar of the ocean, and watch the bright tints of the clear August sunset gradually fading out in the sky that overarched the waste of waters.

"Just to think, Katie," said Arthur after they had sat for a good while in silence, "that there is nothing but water—one wave just like another—between us now and your beloved Scotland. Don't you feel inclined to get a little boat and set out? If I go to the old country this fall, as they talk of my doing, it will be some of that very water I shall cross. There is something strangely fascinating in the idea of being beside an ocean that washes the shores of Britain and France, and Spain and Africa—places that seem more like a dream than a reality to us over here. Well, I hope to see them all some day!"

"I'm sure I shouldn't care to see Africa," said Clara, "a dry, hot, sandy place where nothing grows!"

"Oh, Clara, Clara!" said Arthur, laughing, "that comes of your continual story-books, instead of useful reading. If you had read Dr Livingstone now, you wouldn't have made such a speech as that! Have you read it, Katie?"

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"No; I heard Mr Grey and Helen talking about it."

"Well, you ought to put it down for reading next winter. I'll bequeath it to you when I go away. Africa, in its natural features, must be as interesting as either of the adjoining continents; but then, of course, there isn't the charm of history, and association with human life, which gives to travelling its greatest interest, and draws our hearts to any locality. So, I confess, there are a good many places I should like to see first."

"Palestine, for instance," said Katie; "there is no place I should think half so interesting as that."

They were all very quiet again for a while; then Arthur exclaimed—"Look, there is the young moon! We shall have a full moon while we are here; isn't that glorious? What are you doing, Clara?" he added, observing her gravely nodding her head three times. "Oh, I know;—wishing! weren't you, you foolish child?"

"Yes," confessed Clara.

"And what did you wish for, pray?"

"Oh, I shan't tell you that! That would break the charm. Did you wish, Katie?"

"No," said Katie, "I wouldn't know what to wish for, even if I thought it would be of any use."

"Why have you no wishes at all, Katie?" said Arthur, surprised.

"I should wish Helen were here, if it were possible," she replied, smiling. "And I suppose there are a good many things I might wish for, if I were to try. But I can't tell whether they would be good for me. And it seems to me wrong, as well as foolish, to do such things, as

if we could get what we want in any other way than from God, and as if we could not always pray to Him for what we want."

"Oh, but then, it is little trifling sort of things one wishes for," argued Clara, "not things one would like to pray for."

"But isn't it God who gives us everything, Clara dear? And I read, not long ago, that nothing that troubles us is too small to pray for; and about a good minister who prayed for his horse's recovery when it was sick."

"Oh!" said Clara, "I wonder he wasn't ashamed."

"Why should he," replied Katie, "when Christ tells us that 'even a sparrow does not fall to the ground without our Father's permission?'" And as she spoke she vividly remembered the time when that text first shed light and comfort into her own mind.

"Well, Katie, you are the oddest girl," said Clara,—a speech that was her usual retort when Katie's arguments had left her nothing more to say; and Arthur, who had not joined in the discussion, presently remarked that it was time Katie was thinking of taking some rest.

Next day her fatigue, at last, asserted itself, though not to such an extent as it would have done in a less bracing atmosphere. As it was, however, she felt quite unable to get up till the middle of the day, and then she was content to sit quietly for the rest of it in the most retired corner of the piazza, watching the restless ocean and the groups of visitors lounging about, or passing up and down the beach. She soon made acquaintance with the children who were romping around, especially some little ones dressed, like



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herself, in deep mourning, who, with their mother, a very delicate, sad-looking young woman,—apparently a widow,—interested her very much. The latter sat gazing listlessly at the sea, a book lying idly in her hands, seemingly as much indisposed to move as Katie herself; but gradually, by means of the fancy which the children took to Katie, she and the lady came to form a slight acquaintance.

The rest of the party were away in various directions nearly all day: in the morning, bathing; and in the afternoon, exploring the beach and the neighbouring woods. Arthur and Clara came back full of the results of their tour of observation, and Caroline, always sociable and winning, had already made the acquaintance of some young ladies, with whom she seemed to be already on intimate terms, for she started after tea for a long walk with them and some gentlemen friends of theirs, whose names and position, however, Mrs Winstanley took care to ascertain before consenting that Caroline should join them. As they were pronounced “highly respectable,” on the unquestionable authority of a fashionable lady-friend whom Mrs Winstanley had arranged to meet there, she was quite satisfied.

It was some time before it was thought advisable for Katie to bathe, and then she was not permitted to do so oftener than once in two or three days, since, much as she enjoyed it, it was considered the shock, so frequently repeated, might be too severe for her. However she usually went down when the others did, and amused herself by watching the bathers; or by wandering along the beach, looking at the curious jelly-fish left stranded by the tide,

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and wondering whether there ever could have been any animation in such inert masses of matter ; or she watched the pretty little sea-birds as they ran out after the retiring waves, picking up their prey, and retreating just as the returning billow came rolling in upon them. When she was tired, she generally took refuge, with a book, under the shady side of an old boat, which screened her from the rays of the sun, and even from the observation of most passers-by, while she had the full advantage of the fresh cool air from the sea ; and its steady murmur, to which she liked so much to listen, was alway sounding in her ear. She usually remained there while the others took their brisk walk after bathing, and then returned with them to the house to rest before dinner, when she had another quiet hour's reading. She got through a good deal in this way, and Arthur kept her well supplied with books, having, as Clara said, brought down a "small library" with him. They were chiefly books, too, that contained interesting information, and real food for thought ; so that her reading was not like most of the kind that was done there, merely "killing time."

Sometimes the afternoon was so hot that the sands seemed to be enveloped in a quivering veil of heat as they glittered intensely white and bright against the vivid blue of the sea ; and then they were all glad to rest, either in the shady piazza, or in some of the cool darkened sitting-rooms of the hotel. One of these sultry afternoons ended in a thunder-storm, which came on during the tea-hour, so grand that the dining-saloon was instantly vacated, and all the inmates of the house crowded to the front piazza,

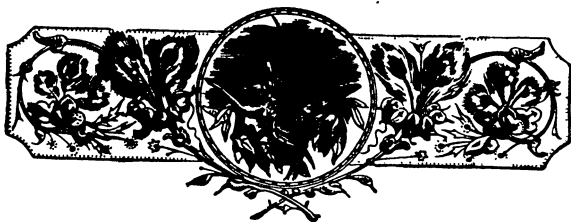
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intent now on the sullen glare that rested on the sea beneath the lowering sky, now on the grand march and meeting of the majestic thunder-clouds, anon on the crash of thunder and the vivid lightning when they came in contact; and then, when the rain had descended with its tremendous down-pour, on the bright, beautiful rainbow that arched the sky, as the sun once more began to gleam through the parting clouds.

Occasionally their afternoons were varied, when it was cooler, by little expeditions into the woods, fragrant with the sweet fern and other aromatic plants, and full of a luxuriant crop of whortle-berries. They were generally joined in these excursions by two or three girls who had become pretty good friends with Clara, and even with Katie, though her shyness and delicacy, as well as the slight peculiarity in her appearance, rather tended to isolate her from intimate acquaintanceship with those of her own age. Clara and Arthur, however, remained faithful to their friend, no matter who might be of the party, and with their society she was always right well content. It was not so with Caroline, who was more easily influenced by the opinion of those around her. She had always been kind to Katie at home, in a sort of patronising way, partly from compassionate interest and partly from real liking. But here she soon noticed the curious and sometimes contemptuous glances that were directed towards Katie, especially among the "set" into which she herself had got. The girls in it were chiefly city belles, spoiled a good deal by the artificial atmosphere in which they moved, and Caroline saw a certain "dash" and "style" about them

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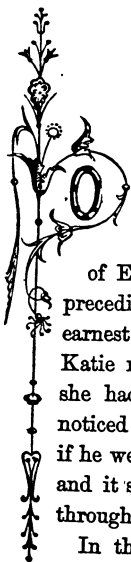
which she, brought up chiefly in the country, did not possess, and greatly envied. Her own natural grace and greater simplicity rendered her true taste really more attractive ; but, unaware of this, she tried instead to imitate her companions, and was extremely sensitive to anything that excited their ridicule, however unjust. So she rather avoided any open intimacy with Katie, though she could certainly have given no good reason for doing so, except the fear lest she might be rallied about it by the girls who talked chiefly nonsense, for want of anything else to say. Katie, however, who was always content to admire Caroline from a distance, without seeking to engross her, scarcely noticed the desertion, or attributed it merely to the claims which her new acquaintances, among whom she was a general favourite, made upon her attention. And as little did Katie, who scarcely ever now thought of her appearance at all, notice any of the meaning glances occasionally directed towards her. Arthur, indeed, who was always on the watch, took care that no one should dare, with impunity, to venture on any such manifestation towards Katie, in his presence, definite enough to be taken notice of by her at least.



CHAPTER XVI.

Thorns in the Way.

"All turn to sweet, but most of all
That, bitterest in the cup of pride,
When hopes presumptuous fade and fall,
Or friendship scorns us, duly tried."



ON the second Sunday of their stay at the seaside, morning service was conducted in the chapel by a young clergyman of the Church of England, who had arrived in the end of the preceding week. His sermon was simple, but very earnest and impressive, and somehow reminded Katie more of Mr Grey and Helen than anything she had heard since she parted from them. She noticed that the preacher looked far from strong, as if he were only recovering from some severe illness, and it seemed to be as much as he could do to get through the service.

In the afternoon, after the early dinner, Katie stole quietly away—avoiding the piazza, with its noisy groups—to the beach, and sat down to read, ensconced in the shelter of her usual place of retreat. She

had her Testament and her "Christian Year" with her, or rather Helen's, which she had brought on account of its conveniently small size. She had not been very long there, and was sitting gazing dreamily at a large vessel bearing away on the horizon, and wondering what Ned and Helen were doing just then, when she heard voices approaching, and recognised Caroline's laugh. She was just going to emerge from her hiding-place, when she heard the voice also of Lieutenant Ainslie, a young officer who had become particularly attentive to Caroline, and was now accompanying her ; so she remained still, hoping that they would not notice her as they passed on, for she instinctively shrank from Mr Ainslie's rather supercilious stare. As they approached, she, of course, could not avoid hearing their conversation. Mr Ainslie was saying—

"I was coming up to you this morning to offer you a drive, but you were discoursing so amiably with that charming little friend of yours in black, that I thought it a pity to interrupt the *tête à tête*. Odd-looking little girl that, cousin—is she ? but I should think she must be something of a bore at times."

Poor Caroline had not independence of character enough to treat this speech as it deserved ; she was always desirous of pleasing the person she happened to be with, and perhaps more so in this instance than usual. So she replied, with, of course, no idea that Katie was within hearing.

"Oh, no, she is no relation ; mamma brought her here out of kindness. One must feel sorry for her, you know, being deformed and having lost her parents, though she is, as you say, a little tiresome sometimes."

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The lieutenant replied with an empty compliment on her amiability, and then they forgot all about Katie for the rest of their walk. But poor Katie had heard what could not fail to wound her acutely. She had so loved and admired Caroline that it gave her a strange throb of pain to hear her talk so carelessly and superciliously about herself, for it is perhaps as keen a pang as a girl of her age can suffer, to know that a friend older than herself, to whom she is enthusiastically attached, has spoken unkindly of her to others. Caroline had said nothing that was positively untrue; but the whole tone of her speech chilled poor Katie to the heart; and then that cruel word "deformed" oppressed her with a vague dull sense of misery. She had known and resigned herself to the knowledge that she was not, and never could be, exactly like others; but the word "deformed" was so harsh, and implied something positively repulsive, that Katie could not bear the thought of it without very acute pain. She sat for some time perfectly still, but with an oppressive sense of wretchedness weighing on her heart; and then a burst of tears gave her relief, and her view of things gradually brightened a little in the cheerful calmness of Nature around her. She read a little in her Testament and her "Christian Year," finding comfort in both, and then, as the afternoon was now cooler, she walked slowly along the beach to some rocks which formed a secluded resting-place out of the way of the gayer promenaders, and which were the usual boundary of her walks. Here she sat for long, scarcely noting how the time was passing, watching the sun gradually descending in the clear bright sky, or the

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white coil of the waves as they rolled up to her feet, and then broke and disappeared. She had fallen on a train of thought not usual with her, and neither happy nor profitable. It seemed to her that things turned out so strangely in the world, and the inequalities of life sadly perplexed her. Her own gentle mother, who was so sweet and good,—why had she always so much care and sorrow ; while Mrs Winstanley, who could not be so good, seemed never to have anything to cloud her prosperity ? Then Helen, why had she to work so hard and deny herself many pleasures, when Caroline, who was certainly her inferior in real excellence, never knew an ungratified wish ? Ned and Arthur too, how differently they were situated ! and as for herself,—the thought was still too full of pain to dwell upon, especially as she feared she was in danger of envious feelings springing up in her heart. So she tried to turn away her mind from what—she was conscious—was doing her no good ; and presently there floated through it the stanza :—

“Then, like a half-forgotten strain,
Comes sweeping o'er thy heart forlorn,
What sunshine hours had taught in vain,
Of Jesus suffering shame and scorn.”

And she opened her “Christian Year” to read over again that hymn for Good Friday which had given her so much consolation and hope before. She laid down the book again, and was steadily looking at the sea, thinking of what she had read, when a slight sound near her roused her attention, and looking up, she was startled to see quite close to her the gentleman who had conducted the service that

morning. He had come unexpectedly upon her, and had stood for a few minutes trying to read the expression of the pale, sweet face, which had interested him in the dining-saloon and the chapel.

"I hope I haven't startled you," he said, smiling; "it seemed to me that I almost knew you from having seen you at the hotel; and if you will allow me the liberty of reminding you, I would suggest that it is time you were thinking of going home to tea, otherwise you may lose it."

His tone was so gentle and polite, and his manner so pleasing, that Katie could not feel there was any intrusion in his thus addressing her; so she thanked him, and got up to follow his suggestion.

"Let me carry your books," he said, with the true politeness which he always showed to every one, no matter how lowly; taking up, as he spoke, the books which had been lying on a rock beside her. "You have been well employed, I see," he added, glancing first at the books and then at her. "So you read the 'Christian Year,' do you? It is a great favourite of mine."

"I like it very much," said Katie, in a low tone, "though I don't understand it all yet."

"No," he replied; "one has to live a good while to do that."

Katie wondered a little what he meant. As they walked he kept turning over the pages in an absent mood. Suddenly he started, and said in a surprised tone—

"Helen Grey! is that your name?"

"No," said Katie, wondering that he showed so much interest in it. "That is not my book; it belongs to a friend of mine."

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"Indeed! she is not here, is she? Where does she— where do you live?"

"At Lynford," Katie answered. "She is there now."

"Ah, then it is the same! I had the pleasure of making Miss Grey's acquaintance once when she was visiting her sister; and I was surprised at seeing her name here."

"Oh, do you know Helen? I am so glad!" exclaimed Katie, to whom the stranger was scarcely a stranger, now they had Helen for their common friend. He went on:—

"My name is Russell; perhaps you may have heard her speak of me, since you seem to know her so well?"

Katie was obliged to confess that she never had; at which he looked, she thought, a little disappointed. He went on to explain:—

"I have been for a long time threatened with consumption. At that time I was obliged to give up my studies for the ministry, which were almost completed; and I was under the care of her brother-in-law, whom I found a good friend as well as a good doctor; and as I was often at his house, I saw a good deal of Miss Grey then."

"I wonder she never spoke of you; but I didn't know her so well then. It was after that that she did me so much good."

"Ah! she did me good too. I was distrustful and hopeless, and despairing almost at that time, for my health seemed ruined and my prospects dark; and she helped me to find out the only comfort in such circumstances, which of course I knew, but could not so well realise before."

Katie looked up inquiringly, but made no reply, so he went on—

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“Let not your heart be troubled; ye believe in God; believe also in me.’ Is not that the best thing to do in trouble?”

The words smote Katie like a reproof for the faithless murmuring in which she had been indulging. She assented, and then said, after a short silence—

“I think Helen felt the need of that herself that spring, for she seemed a good deal troubled for a time, and then she said it was because she had been faithless, but that she had learned now to trust God with all that concerned her.”

After this Mr Russell was silent for a good while. As they were getting near home he suddenly asked, “I suppose your friend, Miss Grey, isn’t likely to come here?”

“No,” said Katie, with a sigh, “I wish she were. But she is going to visit her sister after I go home. I live with her and Mr Grey now.”

“Oh, indeed; then I shall probably meet her there, as I have a church in that neighbourhood. My health is almost restored, but I have had rather hard work lately, and am come here for a little bracing.”

They arrived just in time to go in to tea with the rest of the people; Katie would rather have done without hers than gone in after every one was seated. After tea she explained to Arthur and Clara, who had seen her come up with her new friend, how the acquaintance had arisen, passing over, as briefly as possible, all he had said about Helen; for although she was romantic enough to have made a conjecture of her own on the subject, she could not bear that it should be referred to in the jesting manner which Clara had caught from her new acquaintances,

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and which seemed to Katie only a profanation of things in themselves pure and holy. Indeed, when she was obliged to listen to the tirades of utter nonsense,—not even amusing,—that went on, especially on Sunday evenings, among Caroline's and Clara's new associates, she could not help feeling that if her involuntary isolation had served no other purpose than to keep her out of the range of such frivolities, it had done her some good at any rate. It had done her more good than that, and if she had known the contrast Mr Russell was drawing in his own mind, as he paced up and down, between the serious and sweet spiritual beauty of the little invalid's pale face, and the comparatively vapid, inexpressive countenances of most of the girls around her, she need not have feared ever being repulsive to any one. She, however, had ceased to think much of her afternoon's pain now ; her mind was too full of her subsequent encounter, and of unavailing wishes—stronger than ever—that Helen had only come.

Caroline was not in her usual spirits after her walk. She had not found it so pleasant as she expected, and had had a sort of misunderstanding with her cavalier. Katie had been trying in her afternoon's meditations to solve problems beyond our mortal capacities to prove, but it might have helped a little to diminish her perplexities had she known how much more really happy Helen Grey, and even she herself, were, as they lay down to sleep that night than the envied Caroline Winstanley.

Mr Russell and Katie had many pleasant talks during his stay. Helen was always a fruitful topic, and Mr Russell gradually drew from Katie the history of their

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intercourse, which interested him very much. With Arthur, too, he of course soon got acquainted, and the acquaintance speedily ripened into an intimacy, for they were drawn together by great similarity of tastes, and the earnest manly type of Mr Russell's Christianity, combined with his refinement, culture, and liberality of spirit, had a strong influence over Arthur's still wavering mind. They often discussed questions with which Arthur, from his speculative turn, had been perplexing his mind, and though Mr Russell could not show him the way out of all his perplexities, he could at least lead him to the standing-ground which satisfied himself. Katie, though she could not always fully follow out the meaning of their discussions, enjoyed them immensely, and infinitely preferred sitting in silence listening to such conversations, to taking any part in them herself. For she always distrusted her own ability of saying the right thing, and she felt Arthur was so safe with such a guide as Mr Russell.

One evening, they had protracted their conversation till the daylight had all faded away, and the full moon was shedding a flood of almost golden glory across the sea—for the "glorious moonlight" on which Arthur had calculated had been for some time making the night more beautiful than the day.

"It must have been on some such night as this," said Mr Russell, "that Tennyson composed those lines in the '*Morte d'Arthur*'—do you remember them, Winstanley?—beginning—

' 'The great brand
- Made lightnings in the splendour of the moon.'"

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"Yes," said Arthur, "what a magnificent poem it is! Could you go on with it? I wish I could!"

"No, I don't remember that part accurately; but there is a passage further on, by the way, that bears a little on what we have been discussing, and the ending, about the island valley of Avilion, is very fine. Have you read it, Miss Katie?" he asked, turning to her—"No? Well then, I will try if I can give it to you." So he repeated, with a voice that was low, but full of musical cadences—

"Then slowly answered Arthur from the barge:
'The old order changeth, yielding place to new,
And God fulfils Himself in many ways,
Lest one good custom should convert the world.
Comfort thyself: what comfort is in me?
I have lived my life, and that which I have done
May He within Himself make pure! but thou,
If thou should'st never see my face again,
Pray for my soul. More things are wrought by prayer
Than this world dreams of. Wherefore let thy voice
Rise like a fountain for me night and day.
For what are men better than sheep or goats
That nourish a blind life within the brain,
If, knowing God, they lift not hands of prayer
Both for themselves and those who call them friend?
For so the whole round world is every way
Bound by gold chains about the feet of God.
But now, farewell, I am going a long way
With these thou seest, if indeed I go
(For all my mind is clouded with a doubt)
To the island valley of Avilion;
Where falls not hail, or rain, or any snow,
Nor ever wind blows loudly; but it lies
Deep-meadowed, happy, fair with orchard-lawns
And bowery hollows crowned with summer sea,
Where I will heal me of my grievous wound.'"

Katie forgot everything around her as she listened, and

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was conscious only of the exquisite music of the words she heard, and the beauty of their meaning, which seemed to collect and embody aspirations and thoughts that had floated vaguely through her own mind, and which she could now grasp in an intelligible form. Nor was it surprising that the words, "where I will heal me of my grievous wound," especially lingered in her memory. And she still "sat rapt," like the original imaginary listeners, while Mr Russell went on to speak of the exquisite touch by which the author, in the conclusion of the poem, connects the legend that Arthur would "come again"—an expression, among many, of the deep-seated belief of the world in an approaching Deliverer who is to inaugurate a brighter age—with the peal of Christmas bells, when the poet hears

"The clear church bells ring in the Christmas morn."

When Katie went to sleep that night in the still moonlight, she seemed, like the poet himself, "to sail with Arthur towards that calm and happy 'island of Avilion.'"

Mr Russell preached again the following Sunday morning, and at the request of some of the visitors it was arranged that an open-air service should be held in the afternoon, in the woods, at a short distance from the hotel, at which he agreed to officiate, all the more that he felt his voice had shared in the general strength he had gained in the rest and bracing sea-air he had been enjoying.

Arthur, Katie, and Clara set out together for the place of meeting. "Won't you come, Carry?" said the latter, as they passed Caroline lounging in the piazza. She hesitated, and perhaps would have joined them, but Mr Ainslie

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interposed with some remark to the effect that she had done her duty in going once to church, and that she surely wouldn't deprive them of the music she had promised them,—"Sacred music, you know," he added; "you will keep us all out of mischief too, if you stay;" and Caroline was easily persuaded to remain. As the others went on, Clara was the only one who made any remark, saying, in a vexed tone—

"I don't know what has come over Carry since we have been here. She isn't half as nice as she is at home. I shan't be sorry when we go, for that—and I don't like that Mr Ainslie at all!"

The place where the service was to be held was a pleasant spot, comparatively clear, in the woods, yet shaded by neighbouring foliage from the direct heat of the sun. There was not a large congregation, so that the circle around the preacher was not wider than his voice could easily reach. Mr Russell read the evening service of his church, and then preached from the words, "Heirs of God and joint-heirs with Christ." He spoke simply, but with great earnestness and directness, of the glorious inheritance which Christ had won for all who would receive it; not immunity from certain penalties alone, but salvation from the present power of sin, and immediate entrance on the true eternal life, which begins here and now, as soon as the heart chooses Christ for its master. He said that Christians, even when they had made their choice, did not sufficiently appreciate their inheritance, or expect nearly so much as Christ would give them if they asked Him; that He was ready to bestow

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upon them a light and a strength, which, if they trusted in it, would bear them up over "the waves of this troublesome world," as certainly as His hand upheld the sinking Peter on the sea of Galilee, and that every cross, as well as every joy, would be a means of furthering that ~~the~~ progress which is the real end of our sojourn in this world.

Katie eagerly drank in every word; and many a time afterwards the truths, and even the expressions, she heard that afternoon came back freshly to her mind, mingled with the scent of the sweet fern and bay which breathed their fragrance in the air around her.

As they walked slowly home, Mr Russell overtook them, and Arthur thanked him warmly for his sermon, saying he should long remember it with pleasure, and, he trusted, with profit also. Mr Russell spoke warmly of the pleasure he had had in their society during his stay at the sea-side, and expressed his regret that he must bid them farewell that evening, as he had to start early next morning on his return homeward. They all said good-bye with many hopes of meeting again to renew so pleasant an intercourse, and to Katie Mr Russell said, as he exchanged words with her for a moment apart, that he hoped to meet her friend Miss Grey in September. With Arthur he had one last earnest conversation before parting, and Katie hoped and prayed that it might result in permanent good to one whom she earnestly desired to see altogether a Christian.

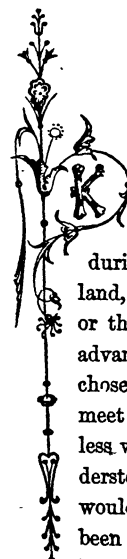
Mrs Winstanley's party remained only a week after that, and as the weather was now getting cold, they turned their faces homeward with the less regret, though with many pleasant recollections of their sea-side sojourn.



CHAPTER XVII.

Changes.

"Then lay on me whatever cross I need
To bring me there: I know thou canst not be
Unkind, unfaithful, or untrue to me."



KATIE found enough to occupy her mind and engross her thoughts when she returned home. A letter had been received, during her absence, from her uncle in Scotland, wishing her brother to come to him for two or three years, that he might have every possible advantage in mastering the profession he had chosen, during which time his uncle would himself meet all necessary expenses. As he was a childless widower, he could not offer Katie, who he understood was an invalid, the comfortable home she would require; otherwise, he said, he would have been delighted to see his niece over along with her brother. Katie, while grateful for his kindness, was very glad that she had not to decide about an invitation which she would have hesitated to accept, unless she

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had seen it to be her clear duty to do so. She had no wish, moreover, to desert the kind friends who had provided her with a home when she needed one ; and they would have been equally unwilling to let her go.

However, it was clear that Ned should accept the advantages that were offered him ; and Katie could not oppose it, though she shrank from the separation involved in it. And even were he to have remained in Canada, she knew they must necessarily be much separated for the next few years ; so she bravely made up her mind to face the trial, which, indeed, did not come single. Arthur had so far surpassed, in his private studies, the standard which was required for his entrance into a Canadian university, and was besides so desirous of seeing the Old World, and availing himself of its advantages, that his father consented to gratify his earnest wish to allow him to go at once to Oxford. His mother trusted that his now greatly improved health and strength would be able to stand the hard study into which she was afraid he would plunge, and be sufficiently reinforced, from time to time, if he spent his vacations in travelling. So it was arranged that Arthur and Ned should start together on their voyage, towards the end of September, and in preparation for that there was plenty both to do and to think of. Clara, too, was to be immediately sent away to "finish" her education at a fashionable city boarding-school ; so that all Katie's companions seemed to be leaving her at once. She did not allow herself to think how lonely she would be when they were all gone, but kept her mind and time full of the work she had to do for Ned, in providing as far as possible for his outfit.

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She would not hear, however, of Helen's visit being postponed, though she unselfishly proposed to defer it until Ned's departure. "And then it would be twice as lonely when you are gone too!" she said; and the argument convinced Helen that it was better to adhere to the original arrangement. Katie, who had written fully about her meeting with Mr Russell, was not surprised at the quietness with which Helen had listened to her eager accounts of him when she returned. Helen never began the subject herself, but Katie noticed that she would listen to her in silence for as long as she chose to go on; and in her secret heart she could not help suspecting that it would not be long before she had to give up Helen too! However, she said to herself that "sufficient for the day was the evil thereof," and that she had enough to do for the present with certainties, without troubling herself with probabilities.

After Helen had started on her visit, the days began to pass for Katie with terrible rapidity: so much had to be done, and there seemed so little time to do it in, though Helen had put everything in train, and Martha gave her most efficient assistance. At length all was in readiness—the last evening had come—and she could scarcely believe that the next morning would see the travellers set off on a journey that might separate them from her for years; and who could tell, indeed, whether or not an earthly reunion was in store for them?

Arthur came to bid her good-bye during the evening, just as Ned had gone to say his farewell to Mrs Duncan and his friends at Pine Grove. He brought her, as a parting gift, a little Bible, beautifully bound in purple velvet, with gold

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clasps ; which delighted her with its beauty, and of which she was a good deal in need, her own being very much worn ; while she wished Ned to take his mother's with him.

"I chose this for you," said Arthur, "because I did not know of anything else you would like better, and because I owe to you my first real appreciation of a book that I value now more than I ever thought I should have done."

"I am so glad of that," said Katie, earnestly ; "and I hope you will always value it, and take it as your guide."

"I hope so," Arthur replied, very gravely ; "and if so, it will be in a great degree owing to your example, and from seeing what its guidance has been to you."

Katie was both thankful and yet troubled, for she could not feel that she had any right to the distinction assigned her ; and then she exclaimed—

"Oh, how I wish I had something for you ; but I have nothing that seems worth giving, except mamma's old copy of the "Christian Year"—if you will take that ; but it is rather faded and old."

Arthur said he would be very happy to take it, if it were not that he would be depriving her of what he knew she so valued. But she said it would only be a pleasure to her if he would keep it as a memento of their intercourse ; and this he thereupon willingly agreed to do.

After her brother and the friend who had been almost like a brother, were really off, and Clara, as it happened, away before them, Katie felt very much the blankness and desolation of the word "gone ;" especially as so many things were always recalling them, and making her realise over and over again how much she missed them. But she

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wisely kept herself occupied with the various duties she had undertaken to discharge for Helen, which were as much as her strength was equal to ; and for the rest, sustained herself by trying to act the part of a daughter to Mr Grey in the long October evenings. Snap was always her companion when she was alone, and he had now become so much attached to her that he rarely, with his own consent, lost sight of her for many minutes. And thus the time passed, not so very slowly after all, till a few weeks brought the welcome tidings of the arrival of the young travellers at their destination, and in good spirits, after a pleasant and prosperous voyage. The next letters told of Ned's being settled with his uncle in Edinburgh, after a very kind reception, and of Arthur's being fairly established in his college at Oxford.

Before these letters arrived, however, Helen had returned home. She had met Mr Russell again, and Katie, from various things she noticed in her manner and appearance, soon suspected,—what Mr Russell's own arrival shortly afterwards confirmed,—that she had promised some day to be his wife. The "some day" was left very indefinite ; and Katie soon found from Mr Russell that it was chiefly because Helen could not make up her mind to leave her father, or to tax Katie with her duties, should she relinquish them. But Katie represented most strongly, though her heart rebelled all the time, how well Mr Grey and she would get on together, and how all that she should have to do would only be an interest for her, and work she should enjoy. She was Mr Russell's most efficient ally, as he gratefully acknowledged, and their joint representations

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succeeded so far as to induce Helen to consent that the marriage should be fixed, if all were well, for the following summer. When it was all settled, and Katie had received Mr Russell's warm thanks, and been claimed as his sister, and had heard Helen declare that she could not have left her father but for knowing his adopted daughter would be with him, she felt as if she really were of some use and importance, after all.

Helen and she spent a quiet, happy winter together, though a little saddened by the thought of the approaching separation. They had plenty of work, and books full of interest, to occupy them at home, and there was always something to be done abroad, as much as they could overtake. They mixed very little in society. Katie was seldom at Pine Grove in Clara's absence, and Caroline herself spent most of the winter away from home, on a visit to one of her sea-side friends, and engrossed with a round of gaieties. When she returned, it was rumoured—truly, as it proved—that she was soon to leave home finally as the wife of Lieutenant—now Captain—Ainslie.

The two weddings took place in the following June. Clara came home from school to be one of the bridesmaids at her sister's, which was the first, and remained to officiate in a like capacity at Helen's. Caroline's was in the church, of course, and was a very gay affair; Katie being present as a spectator, but not as one of the guests. The bride looked extremely pretty and graceful, and the wedding presents were declared to be "splendid," as well as the wedding breakfast.

Helen's was as quiet as it could well be. Katie had

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shrank from the idea of being a bridesmaid, but Helen so much wished to have both her and Clara, that she yielded; and she did not find it so formidable, after all, especially as the groomsmen were Mr Russell's two younger brothers. The Elliots and Mrs Duncan were almost the only guests; but the occasion seemed to be pervaded with the quiet, hopeful happiness which they have most reason to expect who desire, above all things, the approving presence of the Heavenly Guest, who alone can turn life's water into wine.

Katie thought, as she watched Mr and Mrs Russell drive away, how much preferable was the quiet, peaceful, domestic life, to be filled with noble work for God and man, that lay before them, to the career of frivolous excitement and fashionable dissipation to which Caroline Ainslie was looking forward.

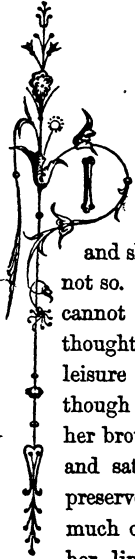
It had, of course, been rather a trial for Helen to leave the church in which she had been brought up, and to which her early associations so tenderly clung, for that which she must now join, as the church of her husband. But she had always loved and admired the Church of England service; and she felt too strongly of how little importance, comparatively, is the mere outward form of our connexion with Christ's kingdom, provided he is the chief object of our attachment, to indulge in any repining over so very small an alloy as this in a cup so full of blessing.



CHAPTER XVIII.

Going Home.

"Fold her, oh Father, in Thine arms,
And let her henceforth be
A messenger of love between
Our human hearts and Thee."



IT might have been thought that Katie's life would have been a very sad and lonely one after her friend's marriage and departure, and she had once feared this herself, but it was not so. Her heart was too full of the peace which cannot be taken away, and her time too full of thought and work for others, to leave her much leisure for realising the sense of her loneliness, though she did continually miss Helen, as well as her brother, from whom, however, she had regular and satisfactory letters that helped not a little to preserve her cheerfulness. She tried to keep up as much of Helen's visiting and other work as, with her limited strength, she could overtake, and at home she always had Martha's watchful care and Mr Grey's genial kindness, as well as an abundance of interesting

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reading, when she was too tired for active work. Helen and Mr Russell very often sent her some new book or periodical which they thought she should like ; and Mr Grey's small library was well stocked with valuable works of older times, some of which—as for instance, "Hall's Contemplations"—she much enjoyed. Mr Grey took care to make her a sharer in the interests of his parish work, so that her mind was never without some object of interest to engage her affections and occupy them for good. Then Helen's occasional visits, and those which she from time to time made to her friend's new home, were full of enjoyment at the time, and of pleasant memories in the retrospect.

Clara, too, returned home before long, not so much spoiled as Katie had feared ; and the latter found her a willing assistant in anything in which she asked her help—though Clara was not good at finding out work for herself. The pleasant visits to Pine Grove were renewed, though the place looked strange in the absence of the familiar faces. Caroline had gone to England with her husband's regiment, and she and Arthur had met again there. Arthur occasionally divided his letters between Clara and Katie ; and a passage in one of those which he wrote to the latter from Switzerland, where he was travelling during the summer, was especially gratifying to her. He had been describing the grand scenery of the Bernese Alps, and the impression which they had made upon him, and added—

"I feel more and more, in the midst of these sublime though silent tokens of God's presence and working, how great will be the glory of 'the King in His beauty,' when

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our eyes shall see Him. Do you remember speaking to me of that once, and of how infinitely small in comparison are most of the objects on which people usually fix their desires here? I am more and more resolved on what was first suggested to me through you—not to rest satisfied with any aim centred in self, or even with the contemplation of human wisdom, and the study of human knowledge, but to look onward to eternal realities, and in their light to try to do as well as I can the highest work to which God calls any man here—that of winning souls for eternal life.”

Not long after she got this letter, Katie received a visit from her former pupil, James Egan, whom, in the tall, respectable-looking youth he had grown, she at first hardly recognised. He was now working with a carpenter in Ashby, with good hopes of being eventually taken into his master's business. He had carried on his education, so far at least as he was likely to require it, and spoke sensibly and gratefully of his obligations to Katie. “I'm sure, miss, it was your trouble that began the making of me, only I'm afraid you'll not think it was worth while for that.”

But Katie had long ceased to regret anything that had happened to her, and was too full of the pleasure of seeing that Jim had turned out so well for any other thoughts.

There are many such boys as Jim in all our towns and villages—“springs shut up”—“fountains sealed,” as far as any development of their higher nature goes, and destined, if let alone, only to perpetuate and extend the evil influences which have made them what they are. It only needs a little watchful but patient care, and some trouble and active kindness, to awaken their better nature, and turn

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them into useful citizens, instead of roughs, to disturb tranquillity and order, and to become at last inmates of so-called reformatories and penitentiaries. Perhaps every reader of this tale might be able to do something towards reclaiming one such ; and were every one to try who could, it would more advance the prosperity of Canada than any development of merely material resources.

Jim had, however, a great sorrow soon after this. The little brother, so clever and thoughtful, who had been Katie's favourite pupil, died of an inflammatory disease, brought on, she feared, by his mother's neglect. She saw him often during his illness, and tried to lead his mind to the Saviour of whom she had so often told him ; and she had the satisfaction of knowing that he died with His name on his lips, as he breathed a simple childish prayer which she had taught him. His sisters are fast growing into nice, useful girls, able to make their father's home comfortable, and likely to become good servants. Their father himself continues steady and industrious, though his wife still indulges in her old drinking ways whenever she has an opportunity. But, through the care that has been exercised over them, it may be hoped that the evil effects of her conduct will not extend beyond herself.

But Katie's work was nearly finished now. In the beginning of the second winter after Helen's marriage, Mr Grey and she went to be present at the baptism of Helen's baby, and in returning home she caught a severe cold from exposure to rain, which ultimately settled on her lungs. She had always had a predisposition to her mother's constitutional malady, and, once seated, it made rapid progress

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in her delicate frame. Her strength sank very quickly ; but as she never complained, and as she always appeared to rally from the fits of weakness to which she was subject, Mr Grey was scarcely alarmed at their recurrence, until Dr Elliott told him he had better send for Helen, as the end could not be far distant.

Helen was much shocked, when she arrived, to see Katie's condition. She could not "restrain bitter tears," though Katie smiled and said, "You should not grieve, Helen, or grudge my going to papa and mamma and Hughie—and 'the island valley of Avilion,'" she added, dreamily—

"Where falls not hail or rain, or any snow,
Nor ever wind blows loudly."

"But that is not the best of what you are going to," said Helen, a little anxiously, through her tears.

"Oh, no!" replied Katie, with a radiant smile; "'the throne of God and of the Lamb shall be in it; and His servants shall serve Him.'"

Helen would not leave her friend again so long as she lived. The fading away was very gradual, and attended with very little pain. Towards the last there seemed to be a prostration of all her powers, and she occasionally wandered in her talk, seemingly recalling pleasant scenes and associations from her past life. Clara, as well as Helen, was a faithful and loving attendant to the last. When death came, it was like the peaceful falling asleep of a weary child, stealing on without her knowing of it. But those who had known so well her heart and life did not need words to assure them that the faith which had held her up so long had not forsaken her now.

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She was laid in the grave on a sweet sunny day in April ; and as Helen saw the green turf replaced on her lowly bed, and heard the melodious carol of a bird on a branch above her head, she thought of that long-past Good Friday when she had gone to see her, and wondered, at the abundant fruit which had sprung from that unconscious sowing.

They could not mourn bitterly over her death, feeling that such mourning would have been selfish. Even Mr Grey, as he felt he might soon follow her, could scarcely regret that so gentle a lamb had been safely folded before his own departure.

Ned grieved a good deal when he heard of his sister's death, and so did Arthur ; but they both soon felt that they could not wish her recalled ; and to both her memory was long a preservative from evil, and an incitement to good. Clara missed her friend sadly, and now tends with care the quiet resting-place, which Helen always loves to visit when she comes to Lynford. Clara tries to fill Katie's place somewhat, and is much more disposed to look for work, and do it in her own way, than she might ever have been but for her friend's example and influence.

Caroline Ainslie is as graceful as ever, and much admired, as well as a great favourite with those whom she meets in society. She has no children, and her time, of which she has a good deal to spare, is divided between the gaieties of her circle and the manufacture of various adornments for her house and person ; but she has never known a genuine enthusiasm for an unselfish object, or the blessedness of working for Him who gives His servants such an abundant award in the success of their work.

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Ned had begun to enjoy an income of his own earning, and has nearly realised his self-imposed task of clearing off the remains of his father's debts. He is steady and diligent, and strongly attached to his early friend, Arthur; who, after completing his university course, has nearly finished his studies for the Church, and endeavours to repay the good he had received from Katie by trying to exercise an influence for good over her brother.

Arthur and Clara Winstanley, Ned, and James Egan have very different destinies before them, and are likely to move in very different spheres; but they have each benefited, in no small degree, by Katie Johnstone's cross, and the way in which it was borne.

THE END.

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