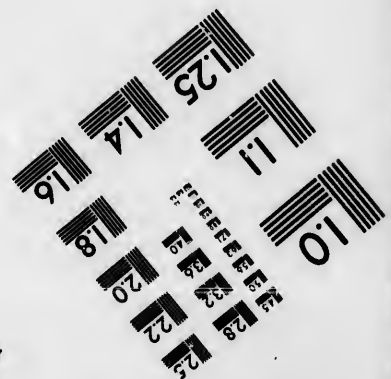
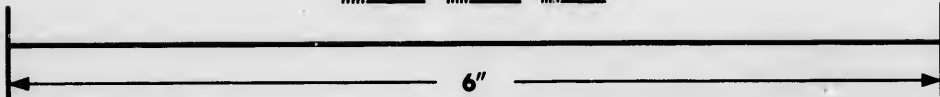
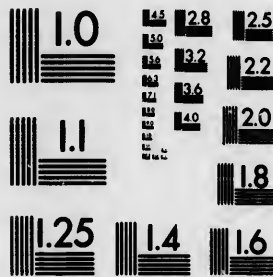


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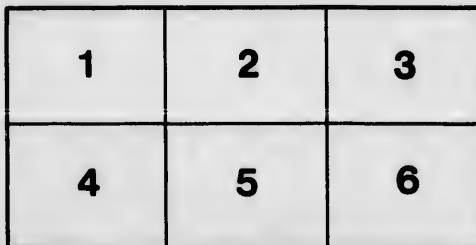
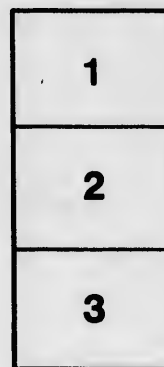
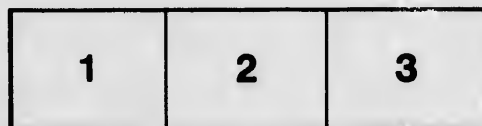
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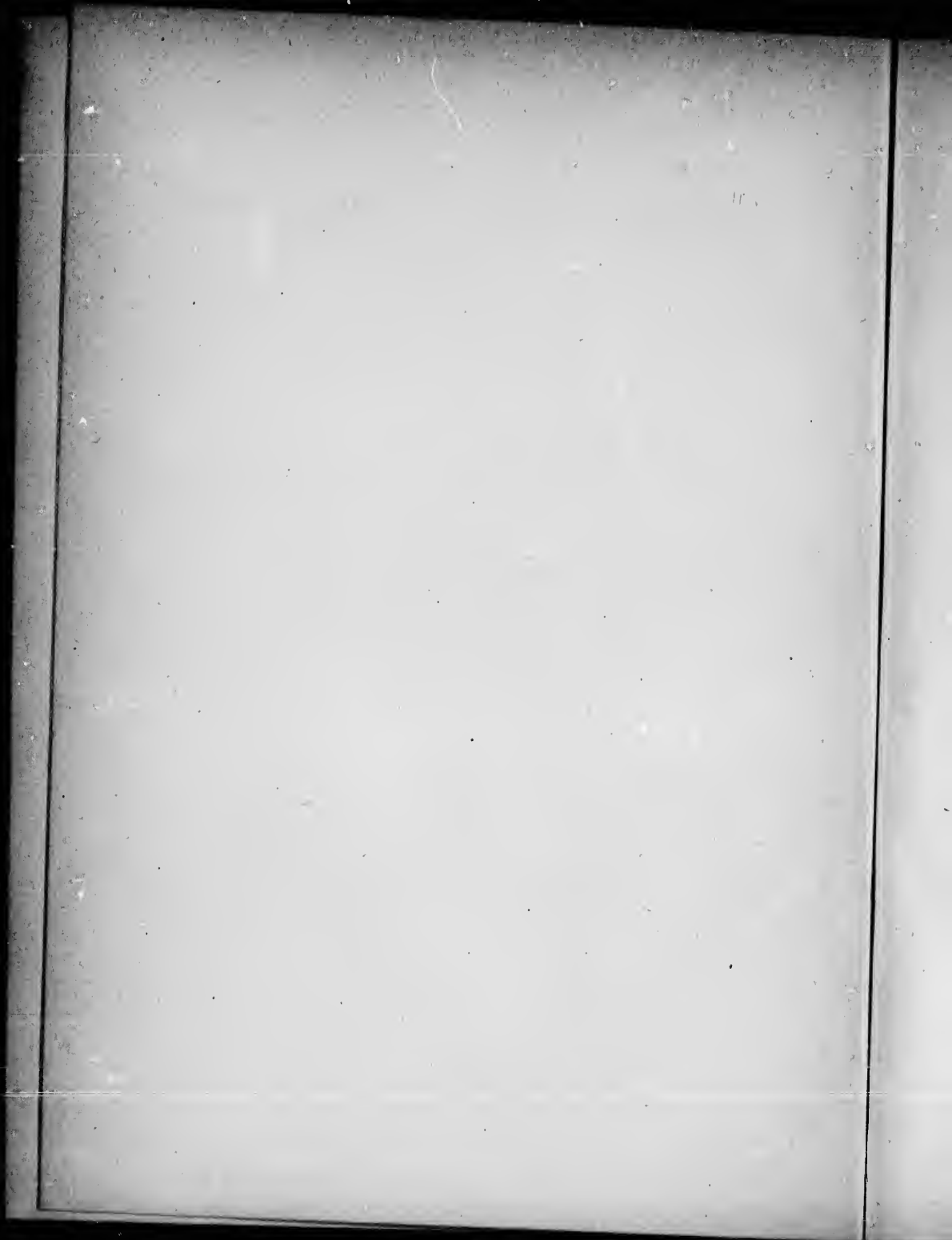
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THE
WRECK OF THE WHITE BEAR,

EAST INDIAMAN.

BY MRS. ROSS,

✠ AUTHOR OF "VIOLET KEITH."

"The slayer *Death* is everywhere, and many a mask hath he,
Many and awful are the shapes in which he sways the sea."

McGEE.

THIRD EDITION.

VOL. II.

Montreal :
PRINTED BY JOHN LOVELL, ST. NICHOLAS STREET.
1870.

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THE WRECK OF THE WHITE BEAR,

EAST INDIAMAN.

CHAPTER I

“Do ye hear us when we call you,—do ye heed the tears we shed?
Oh beloved!—Oh immortal!—Oh ye dead, who are not dead!
Speak to us across the darkness—wave to us a glimmering hand;
Tell us but that ye remember, dwellers in the silent land.”

JOHN MACBETH and Katie sat on a green knoll in front of the cottage door in the calm sunshine, mending a large net intended for the deep-sea fishing. The two boys were spreading the net at their grandfather's side, fancying that they were materially aiding his part of the work. John MacBeth was not the bent old man he had been five years before; he was strong and hearty now. The return of his sons had infused new life into him, and since the twin baby-boys came, nearly three years since, he had been a busy and important man. It was he who had to decide on the names the boys were to be called. Their father could not tell what names they should get, and Katie said:

“Grandfather kent best about names; these were not the first bairns he had named; all she wanted was that one of them should be called John, and grandfather could decide which was to bear his name, and what the other would be called.” And old John had to speak to the minister about the baptism. Robby said—He didna ken what to say, grandfather would need to go.”

It was a serious thing that of naming the boys. John MacBeth said, "He didna wonder the young folks wouldna tak it on themsels; a man's name would follow him a' his days. It was true he had to name a' his ain bairns, a' the nine o' them, himsel' and Jannet, but he had nae father, his father was drooned in the North sea when he, John, was a lad."

"Robby and Katie," the old man said, "didna ken ony o' the trouble o' a married life yet; when they were contracted it was he that had to see the contract made, and to bring it hame and read it and see that it was a' right before Robby and Katie signed it, no that Robby couldna do't himsel'. Oh no, he took good care o' that, and sent baith the boys to the night school for twa winters after they came hame fae the whaling. They had baith plenty o' book learning."

When the marriage came on, it was he that had to speak to the minister, and bid the neighbours to the wedding; now he had to name the bairns, and to please Katie he called one John MacBeth; the other, to please them all, he called Eric Goodbrand, the name of Katie's father, his old friend and shipmate, who Harry Watson had helped to bury twenty years ago in a far island of the West lying below the setting sun, where the spice and palm trees watch over his place of rest, and the winds wander balmy, and the waves come wandering gently over the golden sand, keeping company to the old sea man in that lone grave so far from his kindred.

But to return to the boys. They were so much alike, that previous to the christening the old man had to spend half a day in Peterstown, searching for a necklace of yellow amber for the one, and red coral for the other, "no beads but these," he said, "would do for a seaman's child." When the boys grew strong and could run about, they would take off their necklaces although forbidden often. Eric's coral necklace was lost for

two days. The old man and Katie did little else all the time but search for it, and then they decided the beads were too precious to be risked like that, they would be heirlooms in the house. And then began a new trouble for the old fisherman. No one but grandfather could tell which was Eric, and which was John, so as he said, "lest anything should happen to him, he would put a mark on each child's arm, on Eric a cross, and on John an anchor."

Before the twins came, except to go to the church, John MacBeth had not been in the seatown for years, but now he had to go every day, and the little rogues well knew what he went for; and when they saw him coming down the braes, no matter whether it was rain or shine, there they were, the chubby fellows with their stumpy fat legs, striving which would reach him first; although they well knew they would not get one bit of the gingerbread until he reached the house; then it was laid on the table and cut in two halves. Latterly the gingerbread had all the letters in the alphabet raised on it, and the little men were made to tell each letter after grandfather ere they could obtain leave to eat the piece on which the letter rested.

There was another baby now, only three months old, in the cradle, just within the door; Katie and grandfather could see her from where they sat. When the little girl came, grandfather did not ask what her name was to be, nor did he speak of it, and no one inquired, but when the minister asked for the name, and the old man whispered to his son "Innes Dundas," Katie's tears fell fast, and she clasped her baby to her breast with a new love. The fisher folk wondered at such a name. There were none among the MacBeths or the Goodbrands of that name; what could the old man mean?

The baby stirred in the cradle and Katie brought her out

to the sunny hillock where grandfather sat mending his nets. They both gazed with admiring looks on her blue eyes and fair skin, the inheritance of her Norse grandfather, and each impelled by the same train of thought raised their eyes simultaneously to the huge bulk of the Elfin kirk looming between them and the sky. And then they thought and spoke of another whose eyes were as blue, and whose long fair hair was well remembered by the old man; and they said: "How strange that although Katie wrote so often, no letter ever came in return, for two years back, until last week when those few lines were received, complaining of many letters unanswered, and ending with those terrible words, entering the hearts of the old man and young woman like a barbed arrow as they read: "Katie, I am very poor."

That letter was answered the very day it came and money put into it, but how could they know the fair face it was intended for would ever see it. They had only one address, that to Miss Murray's in George street, and the letters sent there during the two years they now knew had never been returned.

The old man rose and entering the house, returned almost immediately with an almanac, and seating himself began turning over its pages; having found the object of his search, he said:

"It is just five years the nicht since her father was killed. I used never to forget this day, but somehow the last year or twa it has slipt frae my mind."

He looked again in the direction of the Elfin Kirk, saying in detached sentences, as if thinking aloud rather than speaking:

"Whare can that puir bairn be? may the Lord help her, it was nae ordinar trouble that made her write thae words, gin it had been a sma thing, she wad hae said mair about it."

The old man withdrew his eyes from the rocks where they had been fixed steadily for the last ten minutes, and gazing

on the bare cut grass at his feet with a vacant stare, he clasped his hands and repeated over in a low tone, "Katie, I am very poor." "I dare say, I dare say," continued he, repeating his words twice, "and its an awfu' thing to be poor in a great city like Embro. God help us, we whiles little ken what them 'at's far awa' suffers, or what death they'll dee?"

They both sat for some time wrapt in silent thought; at last the old man said in a low confidential tone as if fearful that the birds of the air might carry the matter:

"Katie, I've aften thought thae twa three days o' gaen to Embro to seek her, an jist fessen her hame to bide wi' oursel's till the blast 'at's on her the noo blaws ower?"

"I dinna ken, Pilot," said Katie, speaking in a half-doubting voice and answering as if she had been asked a question, "ye're an auld man noo to gang to a thrang place like Edinbro, an a' unca folk, but what wad ye think gin Robby or Willie war to gang?"

The old man smiled grimly as he replied: "Oh! Katie, ye dinna ken muckle o' the fashions o' this warld, an hoo could ye, 'at was never farer aff than Peterstown; that's the way wi' the wemen folk, they're never fae hame, an' only ken what's roun their ain fire side, but I've been mony a lang voyage to the East Indies, an been aften through the town o' Culcutta, whare ye see black men 'at's richer than Provest Robb, an mair changes o' men's dress in a day than ye wad see in Peterstown gin ye lived to the age o' Methusalem, but that's nae what we're speekin about; do ye think a young lady like her wad come aff her leafu lane wi' ane o' thae chaps o' ours? Na, na," added he, hastily, "she has mair pride than that, she wadna lift a fit to come wi' ane o' them; gin ony body gangs it 'ill need to be mysel."

"Maybe her man wadna lat her come," said Katie.

"Maybe her man's nae ower gude till her, an gin I gang for her an' see ony thing I dinna like, maybe I wadna speir his leave," was the reply. "An for my age that's naething, I'm no that auld, I'm only three score an fifteen last Whitsunday; my grandfather was four score an twal, an he never missed a day at the Kirk, foul or fair, or took a staff in his han' to gang wi'."

The old man seemed again lost in thought,—presently he rose and taking the almanac with him went towards the cottage, saying to himself as he walked along, "Vera little wad gar me gang."

John MacBeth could not rest in the cottage or about the door as usual. Katie saw that he needed employment to divert his thoughts and she must find it for him.

"I say, grandfather, maybe the mistress wad hae Miss Innes' right address, gin ye had time to gang for 't, an gin we had it here I wad write to her again the nicht."

"I hae plenty o' time," said the old man starting up as if Katie had put his own thoughts into words.

"I'll redd mysel' up in ten minutes, but gin I'm ga'en a message to Captain Young's lady ye'll need to gie me ane o' thae kippers to tak i' my han; I dinna like to gang to gentle folks' houses empty handed."

The kippered salmon, the best in the house, was tied up in an old newspaper; John MacBeth dressed in a clean striped shirt, a suit of sailor's blue cloth without a spot, and with the kipper under his arm was on the narrow winding road up the braes leading to Peterstown in less than half an hour.

He was very graciously received by Mrs. Young in the breakfast parlour, and duly presented with a seat, an honour which would not have been accorded to every one in the Pilot's rank, the lady having observed him from the window

coming up the drive bearing what she well knew was the brother of the fine salmon he had brought her on a former occasion.

Miss Margaret, who was in the parlour, stared at the old man as he entered, as if she would ask who he was, and what could account for his assurance in coming there; this evidently disconcerted the fisherman for a moment, but resuming his usual composure of manner, he delivered his present with "Katie's duty to her mistress," and inquired for each member of the family by name; he now asked when she had heard from Mrs. Laud?

"Last week," replied the lady, "but indeed—," she stopped short, and looked confused; Miss Margaret changed her stolid look at once and came to the rescue, saying:

"We do not often hear from Mrs. Laud, but when we last heard she was well."

"Katie has her respecks, an she'll be muckle obleeged gin ye'll tak the trouble to write Mrs. Laud's address on a bit paper," said the fisherman.

The address was written out by Miss Margaret and delivered to the Pilot; he put on his spectacles and read, "care of Miss Murray, George street." There was a disappointment; there was nothing for it but to go home as wise as he had come out.

"I'm come back as I gaed," said the old man handing the paper with the address towards Katie as he entered.

"Wha did ye see?"

"Mrs. Young hersel' an Miss Marget; Mrs. Young was vera civil, but I'm thinkin Miss Marget didna ken me, s'he locket as gin I awed her a half year's rent whan I gaed in."

Katie's dark eyes flashed fire instantly, "Miss Margaret did nae ken ye? nae, weel than, what neist? She did nae

ken John MacBeth the Pilot, 'at's as well kent in Peterstown as the Town Pump! She kent ye well aneuch, as weel's I dae, it wasna 'at she didna ken ye, 'at ailed her, bit she jist thought 'at it wad be vera genteel and like a lady tae lat on 'at she didna ken ye; but she's muckle mista'en there, as she is in mony anither thing; gin she had been a rale leddy she wadna hae deen that, bit it's nae a' gentle blood 'at rins in Miss Marget's veins; we a' ken that Mrs. Young is a rale leddy, an sae was a' her folk, but for Captain Young, his father was naething bit a south country drover 'at made a loke o' siller, sellin sheep an' nowt to the English, an' Miss Dundas wad never marret the like o' him, bit she was wearin to be an auld lass; she cracket the half crown twa three year afore she saw him, or else my certy she wad never hae been Mrs. Young."

Katie paused to take breath, which in her anger at the insult she fancied was meant for her father-in-law, she had almost forgot, and then resumed with a gesture of impatience,

"Oh, Miss Marget, she's aye at her lees, whan she has nae ca' tae tell them wi' her tongue she maun be at them wi' her een."

Alas how many of the would-be great indulge in this falsehood of the eye, passing with an assumed unconscious look, or averted face, the acquaintance of former years, because his coat is threadbare or his hat shabby. In a woman, with the present system of flimsy education for her sex, and consequently undeveloped intellect, this is simply contemptible; in a man it is below contempt. It is indeed pitiable that a man who by steady conduct and honest industry has gained sufficient money to enable him to be a benefactor to his kind, should set no higher store by his talents or the fortune he has acquired than to devote both to buying the acquaintance of

Ensign Fitzdoodle, or Major Snooks; both of whom amuse their leisure hours by mimicing the vulgar manners of their entertainers, and the unsuccessful attempts to ape the habits of those who move in a sphere of society they have been unaccustomed to, and are hence totally unfitted for. Would that such men would learn, that in order to deserve and "bear without rebuke the grand old name of gentleman," it is essential that they cultivate truth in its integrity, and moral purity, without which the highest reason is clouded, and the strongest intellectual faculties are liable to perversion.

Until this pure truth of mind and soul be attained, an impenetrable cloud must oppress the spiritual sense, fostering a skepticism that no evidence can allay. The universe cannot be seen in its higher departments and nobler relations except by the purely true.

The power of dividing in our own souls the true from the false, and adhering with unflinching firmness to what is morally true and pure, more than any thing else, forms the condition on which our elevation to a perfect manhood depends; it is this faculty which produces the feeling of honour or self-respect, and this, when guided by the right spirit and principle, becomes one of the strongest safeguards and best elements of a true man. It is this sense which decides what conduct is becoming a rational, responsible being, endowed with an immortal soul; forbids falsehood in deed as much as in word, the demoralizing doctrine of expediency, every form of dishonesty, and repudiates every subterfuge of selfishness. Possessing this sentiment of unbending moral self-respect, we are richer and mightier than a host of those who, lacking this, have the silver and gold of the world at their command. This will lead us to estimate our position by our mental and moral attainments, and not by any social consideration awarded us. There is no

one so truly grand as he who is governed by this quantity of the true man ; and he who would be one of God's noblemen must cultivate this sentiment of honour, and never violate the sense of moral self-respect, ever remembering that nothing is so precious as rectitude ; while a lie, a dishonest trick, a wrong action, anywhere, for any inducement, is a clinging curse.

Oh, that our moneyed men would follow the example set them largely by the noble men in the United States, where men give princely fortunes, not waiting until the day comes when each must go down to the grave, where perforce, he must leave his treasured dross of earth where it was accumulated, but while they are yet living, among those who bless their shadow as they pass. One man gives hundreds of thousands to build homes which are worthy of the name of home, such as a clerk or mechanic can afford to pay rent for. Another endows a Public Library ; a third a Boys' Home, and so on. Scarcely a town of any importance in which there are not one or more of such princely endowments. I shrink from the word charity so common among us. It is no charity, nor is it viewed as such by the uncrowned kings who give their means for such purposes. It is simply one man giving part of the abundance the Great All Father has given him, to his younger or poorer brethren. While writing the words, " a Boys' Home," the solemn question forced itself upon my own soul, how will each man and woman among us in this city answer to the God who made us all, for the hundreds of homeless orphan boys, who wander all day, begging, selling newspapers, or it may be stealing, that they may eat, and when night comes, " going," as they themselves express it, " anywhere they will be allowed to go,—to a night refuge, a police office, or the jail !" where huddled together, with grown men, the very refuse of society, they each night learn a new phase of iniquity, another obscene idea,

another oath. How would each mother among us shrink with horror at the idea of her own boys being subjected to the contagion of such companionship, and yet who can tell what is hid in the future for those little ones who are now around our knees, and whom in our very heart of hearts we love so dearly, that we feel we could do and dare forever for; whom we would shield from such pollution at the risk of life itself; but all this wealth of love may be quite impotent to save them from such a fate. It may be true at the present moment that there is no fear of such for them; their father is young and strong; he is also rich, he has a good business, houses and land, bank shares, many friends, and the fond mother clasps her babies to her breast with the full assurance that for her beloved ones there can be no such dread future.

But a few short years pass, and just when his boys need him most, the strong young father is laid down to sleep under those green pine boughs up on the mountain. The business is in disorder, it is wound up; some one makes a little money out of it, but for the mother and her children there is nothing. And soon after, at midnight, there is a great cry, Fire, Fire, and the flames seem to reach the heavens. The houses are gone, and on the morrow it is found the insurance has lapsed weeks before. Another short span of time, and the widow takes her little son by the hand and goes that she may draw the half-yearly dividend of the bank stock, which is now her sole dependence. Woe on woe,—the bank has failed, there is nothing to draw. And the poor mother goes home sick in body and crushed in spirit, and that night her two eldest children are awoke by the poor crazed mother calling aloud — “John, John, why do you stay so long? Come home, come home.” And long ere the dawn her spirit passed in that wild dream, and she too was laid down soundly sleeping beneath

the pine boughs. And the five children, all under nine years of age, what of them? They had friends on this continent, and kindred in distant Europe. All were applied to and all refused the responsibility of adopting even one of the children.

Reader, this is no fancy sketch, but the simple truth, and as the like may befall the children of each one of us, may God help us to realize the startling fact that we are in very deed "our brother's keeper." That if we see not to it that those orphan boys are clothed and fed, and are brought up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord, they may perish in their iniquity, but their blood will God require at our hands.

That night John MacBeth had a troubled sleep, disturbed by wild dreams; at last to shake off those fancies of the night he sat up in bed, throwing off part of the bed clothes. It was very dark, he could distinguish the window from the wall and that was all. His face was turned in the direction of the window, and he sat looking out into the darkness for several minutes.

A loud tap on the window glass, as if given by the joint of a man's finger, startled him, the sound seeming to enter his bones and marrow, the hair of his flesh stood on end, large drops of cold perspiration rolled from his forehead; for the first time in his life he knew what fear was, yet he knew where his help was also, and he was about to demand who was there, in the name of the Lord, when a voice he knew well, although heard by him only once, and that years ago, called in the same clear ringing tone as it had then done, "John MacBeth, arise from your bed and seek the young girl you rescued from the waves in the Elfin Kirk." The old man's fear was gone,—and reverently removing his worsted nightcap from his head, he answered in a strong voice, which sounded

in his own surprised ear, as the same hè had used in his early manhood :

“ By God’s help so I will.”

In a few minutes he was half dressed, and out at the end of the cottage looking towards the sea ; and there, far out, opposite Black Pots, seven miles off, was distinctly seen the steamer’s light, making for Peterstown Bay.

A second or two more, John MacBeth had struck a light, and was standing by Katie’s bedside.

“ Katie, my bairn, are ye sleepin’ ?”

“ No, is that you, grandfather ? What’s the maiter, are ye no weel ?”

“ I never was better in a’ my life. Rise, Katie, and put twa three sarks an’ stockins, an’ my Sabbath claes thegither, I maun be aff to Embro the nicht, wi’ the steamer, to seek that lassie.”

“ The steamer’s passed twa hour, sine, grandfather !”

“ She’s nae that ; she’s fair fornent Black Pots the noo ; an’ Katie,” said the old man in a solemn voice, “ the same man ’at came for me to tak’ Miss Innes out o’ the Elfin Kirk came the nicht and bade me seek her again.”

And he told her of the knock that had appalled his heart, and of the voice and words which imparted strength and gave purpose to his soul, adding, “ I hae vowed to the Lord to seek her, an’ I’ll gang an’ fulfill my vow.”

Katie’s husband, who had been awoke by the conversation between his father and Katie, and was a silent listener to what the old man last said, now observed, “ Father, ye’ve likely dreamed it a’.”

“ No, I didna dream ae word o’t,” said the old man, in a strong dotedermined voice, “ nae mair than I dreamed the nicht I ga’ed to the Elfin Kirk ; rise Robby an’ waken Willie to man the boat ’at ’ill fess me to the steamer.”

John Macbeth returned to his own room, dressed himself in the blue suit he had worn the previous day on his visit to Peterstown; and unlocking his money drawer took therefrom a leathern purse, put gold into one end, and silver in the other; lastly putting the purse so filled into an inner pocket in the bosom of his capacious vest; ere he had completed his arrangements his eldest son was by his side.

"Father," said he, "the steamer is sure enough makin' for the bay, something strange has happened to keep her so lang behind her time, an' no a wave on the sea, or a cap fu' o' wind; she should hae been here three hours ago; lat me gang to Edinburgh in your place, father, Willie will easy get some of the idle lads frae the seatown to gang to the fishin' wi' him. I'll be less missed out o' the house than you, an' I'm stronger to gang through the streets an' seek the young lady; fear nae, but I'll bring her hame gin she's willin' to come."

"Na, Robby, ye're a better fisher noo than I am; there was anither day o't; I was ance 'at I wad row a boat wi' ony man in the seatown; but ye canna dae the wark at I'm gaen on the nicht, you or anither; gin it had been sae, I wadna hae gotten it to dae. Them 'at came for me, kent better than you or me either wha to send on his errand. Gang awa noo an' help Willie out wi' the boat, I'se warrant the steamer's near han."

Jean Guibran was about and making preparations with the rest, but to the surprise of all she offered no objections to her master's departure, saying very quietly, "That the ane that sent him out wad fess him hame as he did afore."

While the other members of his family were busying themselves for his departure, the old fisherman went into the room where his three grandchildren lay in their rosy sleep; stooping over their couches he kissed and blessed each in succes-

sion, and this done he knelt down and prayed that should he never return, the God whom he had served all his life long would give grace to their father to bring up these children in His ways and to His glory. He kissed them once again, and now entered the kitchen, calling to his children to come, and with him worship God, ere he went his way.

The steam vessel was now out in the bay; they could see its light from the end window. In a few minutes more, Jean Guibran and the children were the sole inmates of the cottage, the others all accompanying their father on board the vessel.

CHAPTER II.

"God hath His mysteries of grace,
Ways that we cannot tell,
He hides them deep like the sweet sleep
Of Moses He loved so well."

JOHN MACBETH would not take a cabin passage as his children wished him to do: "Na, na," said the honest seaman, "I aye like to be among my equals; the cabin's for the gentles, nae for auld fisher folk. They wadna like me, an' I'm sure I wadna like to be wi' them; I hae mair respeck for mysel' than to pit my feet in ither folks shoon.'

A hearty "good-bye, father," and "God bless you, my bairns," were said, the steamer got underway, and the little boat returned to the shore.

The old man walked the deck all the morning, which was now dawning in the east. He had never been on board a steam vessel before, and everything around him was new and wonderful. He found his way to the engine room, and there his tongue was powerless to express the thoughts that crowded on his brain as he looked on the immensity of that living power. He was never satisfied looking and wondering; when he became so warm that he could stand the heat no longer, he went on deck, but only to return again in a few minutes, divest himself of his coat and vest, to gaze and wonder

On the vessel's arrival at Granton pier late on Saturday night, John MacBeth was asked to remain on board over Sunday; he had found a friend in the mate of the steam vessel, one who had sailed with his son Lewie, and recognised

the father, old and grey as he was, from the likeness subsisting between himself and his son.

This was an arrangement particularly agreeable to the old man ; he was at home on the sea ; and in the great town up yonder, with its thousands of fine houses, and ten thousand strange faces, he scarce knew where to go.

The following morning he was dressed for church before seven o'clock, resolved to go to Miss Murray's, find out Mrs. Laud's address, and see her before going to church.

A cab was soon found to convey him to George street, Edinburgh, and by eight o'clock he was sitting in Miss Murray's parlour waiting for that lady to descend, she being still in the arms of Morpheus.

The lady took a long time to dress, but the old man was not impatient ; he had now nearly reached his goal, he would wait, even if Mrs. Laud's residence should turn out to be in the other end of the city several miles off, a cab would soon bring him there ; and since his pleasant drive from Granton Pier, the pilot had imbibed a taste for riding in a cab. He had provided himself with plenty of money, more he was sure than he had any need of, and he did not wish to bring any of it home.

Miss Murray at last. She won John MacBeth's heart as she did most people's at first, by the frank kindly way she received him, as if he had been an old friend ; but alas ! she knew nothing of Mrs. Laud, had never seen her since the day of her marriage ; the letters which came to her address were called for every now and then. The last letter lay a week in the house ; a gentleman called for it late last night.

"Who was he?"

"She could not tell. She had never seen him ; he only called once in a great while, asked for the letters and they were delivered, that was all she knew."

The pilot lingered as long as propriety would admit, now and then asking a question, in hopes the answer he received would be some guide in his search, but at last he was obliged to go, lest he should, as he said to himself, "wear out his welcome." He knew not where to go, he was in idea farther from the object of his search than when he entered Edinburgh; he only knew that Katie's letters had been received by some one else, not by Innes.

He bade Miss Murray good morning, was graciously smiled and bowed from the room, and was on the wide street with its church-going crowds, hurrying in two distinct streams on each side of the pavement; what was he to do? he was at his wits end. It was now time for church, he would inquire the way to the nearest Methodist chapel, perhaps before the service was over he would think of something. What that something was likely to be, he had not the slightest idea, he was in a dilemma out of which he could see no way. Sunday passed in going three times to church, and wandering up and down George street; he fancied some how the object of his search could not be far from there.

Late at night he returned to the steam vessel, and now made a confidant of the mate by telling him the business which brought him to Edinburgh.

The mate was a friend in need, told him he was utterly on a wrong tack, that on the morrow he, the mate, would take him to a friend of his who kept a tavern in Leith; through the help of this man, who was in a public line, and had lived all his life in Leith and Edinburgh, he would be sure to find the lady in twenty-four hours. The steamer did not sail until late Tuesday night, they might return by the first trip if they liked.

The mate performed his promise, and the jolly landlord of

the "New-rigged Ship," undertook to find the lady if she was above ground.

A directory was procured and duly inspected by the whole three, the mate, the landlord and the fisherman, but only two persons of the name could be found ; Sir Francis Laud, Lady Laud. These could have no connection with the one he sought.

The landlord's clerk was called into the consultation ; he at once suggested that the lady might be some poor relation of Sir Francis and Lady Laud, wisely held his head to one side, the side on which he kept his pen stuck behind a capacious ear, and said : " If he were in Mr. MacBeth's place he would try, it was only a civil question, ' If they had any poor relations,' if they were real gentry they would give a civil answer ; he thought by the look of the name it was a good one. Sir Francis must be a baronet ; if so it was all safe, they would have an old butler who knew all about the family, and would answer all questions civilly ; but if it was only a Sir, made by the Queen, there would be little hope of hearing anything. The servants never knew anything about the relations of such cattle. They never had any, or if they had, they kept their thumb on them."

John MacBeth thought he would take the clerk's advice, he would try.

In a trice a piece of paper was torn from an old letter, the address of a house about a mile beyond the old town, in the direction of Buccleuch place, written out and handed to the old man and a cab procured to drive him there.

A fine house it was in John MacBeth's eyes, with broad steps leading up to a pillared door ; the grounds seemed rather neglected it was true, but it was a grand place ; the house twice as large as Provost Robb's, in Peterstown. The old man's heart misgave him.

“Na, na,” said he, speaking to himself as if he were at home on the Links of Peterstown, with no one to listen but the twin boys, “na, the freens o’ them ’at bide in a house like that are nae puir folk ; nae doubt Miss Innes is a rale leddy, the Dundas’ blood is as guid blood as is in the country ; but she’s ower poor to be a frien’ by marrin’ wi’ thae folk, they wadna let her be in want, (as I sair fear she is) for their ain sake ; an’ that rascal ’at got the letter an’ never gave it till her ; weel,” said he, as if checking himself for thinking evil of another, “I should nae say that, it was only Saturday night ’at he got it, may be she has’t or noo, an’ gin sae, she’s nae ill aff for meat at ony rate.”

As he stood thus cogitating with himself, the door opened, and two young ladies and a gentleman came out and descended the steps, talking gaily to each other.

“Noo’s my time,” said the old man, “afore the flunky gangs down the stair again.”

Ascending the steps he rang the bell, which was immediately answered by a neat-looking servant girl, instead of the flunky he expected.

“My lassie,” he began, “Ken ye gin your folk hae ony frien’s in the town o’ the same name wi’ themselves.”

“I dinna ken, gudeman,” replied the girl, “but I hardly think it. Ye’re frae the east coast,” added she, enquiringly.

“Aye, ’deed am I, an’ I’ve come a’ the way frae Peterstown to seek a young lady ’at’s marrit wi’ a man o’ the name o’ Laud.”

“I come fae the east coast mysel’,” said the girl, “but nae sae far awa as Peterstown. Come in, an’ I’ll ask the lady but she’s gae proud, they’re English folk an’ dinna belang to here.”

The girl went into a room opening from the hall, and

returning in a few seconds said, in a low voice, "Lady Laud does na ken onybody o' her name in Edinburgh, but she says ye'll find out in the directory."

The pilot told her that had already been searched in vain. The girl seemed sorry, she could not help him asking if it was his own daughter he sought?

"Na, nae ae draps blood to me; a leddy, a real leddy, but I'm feart she's marrit wi' some ne'er-do-weel, an' we ken weel aneuch 'at they're nae weel aff. My goud-dochter was her leddy's maid afore she marrit, an' they're feart she's in poverty, an' I came to fess her hame."

The old man was unwilling to leave the house, his last hope seemed to linger here with those who were of the same name; but a movement inside the room made the girl hurry to the door. He saw his further stay might make mischief for her, and he turned from the large house, with its ill-cared for grounds, scarce knowing where to go.

On he went, back in the direction of the new town, with hardly an object in view, except a vague hope that he might meet the object of his search in the streets. He passed on into one of the wide crescent streets with its handsome houses and well-dressed people, not hurrying on as in other parts of the town, but walking leisurely along as if they came out for pleasure, to kill time, or anything compatible with perfect leisure, and a gentlemanly or ladylike demeanour.

Where was he to go now? or what clue had he to go by? he was as completely out at sea as if he had been in a strange country speaking a strange tongue. All day, a long day it was, he wandered about from street to street, going into every second or third shop, asking if any one of the name of Laud lived in the vicinity? but all in vain, in some shops they gave him a directory, in others they did not know the neighbours,

he had better ask at the next door ; which he would do with the same success.

Each night he drove down to Leith, and the morning found him up in Edinburgh again, to be again disappointed ; the fourth day he took a lodging in Edinburgh, so that he might go out in the evening ; perhaps in the evening there might be more chance of meeting her, her clothes might be too poor for a lady like her to go out with in the day time. One day it occurred to him he would go to Miss Murray's, she would know what church Miss Innes frequented ; doubtless the minister knew where she was ; this was a bright thought, and acted on immediately, but it was equally futile with all his other efforts.

Miss Murray could not say what church Mrs. Laud attended ; while she resided in George Street she wandered about from church to church.

“ God help me,” said the old man as he turned from the door, “ what am I to do ; I canna gang hame wantin' her, an' I may spend my days wandering about this great town an' never see her face ; naebody kens ane anither here.”

It was late in the evening, the lamps were lit, and the old man wandered on, talking to himself, dispirited and sad ; he must have walked far, he was very tired, and thought of returning to his lodging ; when he looked around he found himself in a part of the city he had never seen ; and what was worse, he could not tell the way back to his temporary home, the street was narrow, the houses comparatively low, and few shops ; it was as well to go forward as to retrace his steps, the first shop he came to he would ask his way ; a broad light streaming across the street at some distance indicated a shop, it was conspicuously seen, from there being so few lamps on the street ; he entered and asked his way to the part of the town where he lived.

"Ye're late out to be sae far frae hame gin ye bide there," said the person whom he addressed, "its three miles good walking; ye'll be a stranger in Edinbro?"

"I am that; an' ower far frae my lodgings to gang there the night," said the fisherman, looking at his watch, "gin I maun gang on my feet; are there ony cabs on this street?"

"No ane," was the reply.

"Could ye direct me to a decent lodging for the night? ane 'at wadna be ower dear."

"I am no lang here an' dinna ken the neebours, but if ye gang to the corner o' the street there's a grocery there, an' the man's a rale decent man, an' owns the place, its him 'at owns this shop an' a' the tenement, he'll be sure to tell ye whare ye'll get a lodging."

The old man had been walking all day, and this long walk in the late evening was too much for his strength, he was thoroughly fagged out, and gained the grocery with slow weary steps; he sat down and preferred his request, adding, he was a stranger in Edinbro, had walked all day, and was very tired.

The man answered him civilly and sent his boy to shew him a lodging not far off; while following the boy with slow heavy step, a great dog running swiftly along in the same direction, almost pushed the old man from the pavement, and instantly turning round facing the fisherman, snuffed round him in all directions.

The pilot did not like these demonstrations from a strange dog, and tried to beat him off but in vain, the dog kept close by, and when the boy stopped at the lodging-house door, held the old man's coat between his teeth to prevent his entrance.

It was impossible to disengage the coat from his hold without tearing it; the boy entered the house and brought out the landlady bearing a lantern, accompanied by one of the

lodgers to assist in relieving the pilot from the grasp of the dog. As the light fell on the dog's head, the fisherman gave an exclamation of joy, turned round the brass collar and read "Dundas." The dog and he were off together in a second, the old man walking with as light a step as he did thirty years before.

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CHAPTER III.

"Secrets of Truth and Passion, and the days of Life's unreason;
Perhaps not all atoned for, in the judgments of the Lord.
Secrets that still shall slumber, for I will not bare my bosom,
To the gaze of the heartless, prying, unconscionable crowd,
That would like to know, I doubt not, how much I have sinned and suffered,
And drag me down to its level—because it would humble the proud."

I WAS startled from my reverie by a loud bang at the outer door, and then a tap as if made by some one's hand; the first sound made my heart ache, could Maida have escaped? it was just the noise she used to make when she came home and found the door shut; another tap, Mrs. Wilson went down and opened the door, and then she stood speaking to some one for several minutes; can that be Maida coming up stairs? the attic door has no latch, she bursts it open—she is by my bedside, and close behind her, John MacBeth the pilot from the Links of Peterstown.

The old man put his hand on my head saying in a voice full of pity, "My bairn, my bairn," he leant over me and kissed my brow; I opened not my mouth, I was past speaking, almost past feeling; I could only realize that God had sent him, *that* God whose goodness I had dared to doubt. I took his hand and pressed it to my breast, and then relief came, I wept such merciful tears; God sent them also. "He hath of His goodness prepared for the poor."

In half an hour more Mrs. Wilson, Willie, and the sick nurse who lived next door were in the room, there was a large fire in the grate, the table spread with tea, bread and butter, eggs and ham; one needs to have starved on coarse dry

bread for months as we had done, to know the value of such food.

The nurse took my baby by the fire and fed him with rusk food seasoned with wine, he opened his eyes and instead of turning from the food as he had done for weeks, drank it greedily ; when the woman thought he had enough, she came and laid him by my side, saying he is so worn, it will take great nursing to bring him to ; he looked in my face and smiled, he had four teeth, in the morning he had not one !

The child grew better day by day, and hour by hour, but starvation, unremitting labour, and worst of all the weariness of spirit which ever sayeth " would God it were morning ;" and when morning cometh bringing light and joy in its train, turneth with sick soul from what it once loved so well, and the cry again ascendeth " would God it were night,"—all had done their work but too surely on the poor mother. My over-tasked frame sank hour by hour ; for two long weeks I never left the bed I had lain down upon to die with my baby.

He was growing strong and fat down stairs, while I lay in my darkened attic room, the line of light admitted by the ill-fitting window shutter giving exquisite pain to my burning eyeballs, and throbbing brow.

John MacBeth scarcely left me night or day, amply providing for all my wants, and paying liberally for doctor and nurse ; the nurse gentle and kind as she was in the old time when she could expect neither fee nor reward.

My youth and a naturally strong constitution at last began to exert their influence, and by the end of October I was able to sit up in an easy chair in the little parlour, and talk of going home with my kind preserver ; he who had twice been the means God took to save me from the power of death ; from the waves of the sea and the terrible things that inhabit

the mighty deep; and more terrible than they, from the famine which stalketh at noon day in the lanes and attics of our crowded cities, where women sit in garrets, or worse still in cellars, nearly day and night, their life blood dropping, dropping, wearing out flesh and spirit to obtain bread, dry bread. And little children of seven, and eight, aye and of six years old, must rise with the day to hem and stitch, together with their lean mothers. And when wearied nature will hold out no longer and the tired eyelids droop and the heavy head nods over the wasted little fingers whose work is so sorely needed, and they start in conscious neglect; awoke by the touch of a bony finger, and the sound of a sad voice from her who would so gladly see them free like the other children, who whoop and laugh down in the street; and are told to hurry on to finish their allotted tasks,—what then?—they may go out to play—to play!—what a mockery—the starving children of the starving shirtmaker play—never—when their tasks are done and their worn bodies so wearied they can scarcely drag them along, then they may go to sleep on that filthy straw bed in the corner, with its scanty covering, and breathe the fetid air they have breathed day and night, since the father died, and which they will continue to breathe, until they one by one die of the famine plague, in a land flowing with milk and honey.

We were to leave Edinburgh for Peterstown in a few days; dear Peterstown it seemed to me now. I felt as if the stones on its streets were dear and familiar friends, and that were I once more in the woods of Barr, I could walk barefooted into Peterstown.

I was to be an inmate of John MacBeth's cottage for the winter, but I was not to be a burden to the old man who had come so far to seek, and done so much for me; we had talked

our plans over many times, and when he saw that I was determined to earn my own bread, he agreed with me that a school for the fishermen's children would pay well.

My plan was to hire a room in the seatown and to attend there from nine in the morning until five in the afternoon; we, John MacBeth and I, thought it would succeed; at all events I would try.

I wrote to Katie, that we would leave Edinburgh on Tuesday evening, and hence be with her early on Thursday.

I had but one more Sunday to spend in Edinburgh and I resolved that part of the day should be spent in the church where I had heard Dominic Sampson preach; John MacBeth had gone to town to purchase our tickets for the voyage and I sought my bed chamber to pack up the little wearing apparel which still remained of the stock I had when the failure of Dundas & Rogers put a stop to my power of purchasing such things.

I emptied my trunk on the floor, and in doing so the picture given me by the fisherman appeared at the bottom under the newspaper lining where I had placed it on my arrival in Edinburgh; never thinking of it again, I was as totally oblivious to the possession of that picture as if I had never seen it.

I lifted it up, looked at the face, and going to the little glass which hung on the wall compared it with the worn cheek and hollow eye I saw reflected there. The portrait was that of a girl apparently about twenty years of age, with hair and eyes like my own, but there the likeness stopped, the rose leaf rounded cheek and full lip, with the calm look of confiding happiness which gave its character to the face, how different from the faded lip and furrowed brow where each line graven there was only a type of one more deeply ploughed in the

heart, giving to the living face the anxious careworn expression it wore.

I carried the picture down to the sitting room which my old friend's care had provided for me, and hung it by its white ribbon over the mantle piece, so that it might attract the old man's eye on his return; I was not then aware what painful memories for him were connected with that picture.

The pilot returned sooner than I had anticipated, and entering hurriedly, asked if I had seen his purse; I had not. The room was searched and also the chamber in which he slept, Mrs. Wilson and the lodgers in the first flat consulted (the house was full of lodgers now), but no one had seen the purse, it was no where to be found. The old man said he was positive he had it in his coat pocket when he went out, he counted his money previous to his departure, there were ten sovereigns in one end and ten shillings in the other; on his way to the steamboat office he stood for a few minutes in a crowd attracted to a bookseller's window by a dispute between the master of the shop and a boy he was accusing of breaking a window pane; he was jostled once or twice in the crowd and advised to leave it by a young man who took the trouble to shew him a short cut to the steamboat office. After this man left him he entered a toyshop to buy some little present for each of the twins, and there he missed his purse.

"Dinna concern yoursel my bairn," said the old man, seeing the vexation I could not conceal, while he himself took his loss quite coolly; "it will only keep us a week longer in Embro, that's a'. I reckon it has drapped frae my pouch, an' maybe the ane 'at fund it had muckle need, sae ye'll write to Katie the nicht, an' Robby 'ill sen mair siller out wi' the mate o' the steamer."

"It is a great loss," said I, feeling much concern that such

a large sum should be gone in addition to what had been already spent in my behalf.

“ Weel there was mair loss at Culloden, an’ I’m nae ane ’at ’ill greet ower a broken net, there’s naething like settin’ tae an’ pittin’ in a new bit. When I was a young lad nae saxteen year auld, I ance lost five poun’, it was a’ I had in the warld, an’ I had wrought sair for’t for mony a lang day, its nae easy for a fatherless and mitherless laddie ’at has a’ thing to buy, an’ ilka steek ’at’s pittin’ in his claes to pay for, to pit past siller; it taks a lang time to win five poun’. It was to pay my fittin’ in a boat, an’ I thought ’at gin I wrought weel an’ we had ordinar luck, the half ’o’ the boat wad be mine afore I was twenty; weel, I let it fa’ in the sea an’ I saw it gang down afore my een, but I never mourned for’t, I pat a stout heart to a stey brae, an’ twa days after I shipped on the ‘Jean Browdee’ for London. Fac that I shipped to the Indies, an’ I sailed on the same ship four years, an’ after that for sax year whan I was a marrit man, an’ wan mair siller than I could hae made at the fishin’ in twenty years, gin the boat had been a’ my ain; sae ye see it was a braw day I lost the five poun’.”

The old man was sitting in the easy chair opposite the fire and as he finished speaking looked up to the mantle piece; he at once observed the portrait, and taking it off the nail, said:

“ Sae ye hae keepit the picture a’ this time; weel the time’s come noo ’at its needed, a frien’ o’ mine tell’t me lang sine ’at thae red beads was worth near han’ ten poun’, sae we’ll e’en sell’t an’ gang hame the first o’ the week after a’; an’ I’m glad o’t, for tho’ I did na tell you that, I’m feart this is the last trip o’ the steamer gaen North; whan she comes back here the mate says she’ll likely be laid up for the winter; an’

it wad be a caul' journey for the bairn or yoursel' either to gang in the coach this day o' the year."

Mrs. Wilson was called in to hold a consultation on the subject, and repeating the pilot's words that such a long journey at this late season by mail, would go hard with myself and the child both, offered to bring the old man to a jeweller's shop where he would be sure to receive the worth of the picture. Her offer was thankfully accepted, and that afternoon they both took their way to the upper part of the new town, bringing the portrait with them for disposal.

On entering the shop John MacBeth asked to see the master, and an old man immediately came forward, the picture was put into his hand and offered for sale.

The jeweller looked carefully at the picture, turned it round and then asked :

"How much do you want for this?"

"Ten poun'," said John, "but maybe its no worth that, an' gin sae I'll nae sell't, less wad hardly sair my turn."

"Aye is it," returned the jeweller, "worth that and a great deal more; where did you get it?"

The old man recounted the sad accident that made it his thirty-five years before.

"And ye have had this portrait by ye all that time?"

"No, I gae't three years sine to a young leddy, 'at was as like it as twa pease, she came to Embro then, an she's in poverty now, an' that's what maks me sell it; I'm nec lin' the siller to fess her hame."

The jeweller opened the glass cover of the portrait, and shewed the pilot and Mrs. Wilson the words, "Agnes Fortesque," engraven thereon, and on opening the back, there appeared the portrait of a man about forty years of age, the name "Philip Fortesque," occupying the same place as the words on the other side.

"I mounted these portraits," said he, "nearly forty years ago, the lady whose likeness this is has been in her grave for many a long year, but the gentleman is hale and hearty, although he's a different man now from what he looks here; he's in my shop once or twice every week, and I'm sure will give you double what you ask for the locket."

"Gin ye ken the owner o' that picture, he'll get it fae me for naething, its nae mine; an' it was only a sair mischance 'at gae it to me, sae ye'll jist keep it an' gie 't to the gentleman it belongs to, an' tell him 'at ye got it fae auld John MacBeth, the pilot fae Peterstown."

And so saying, the old man turned to leave the shop.

"No," replied the jeweller, putting the picture into Mrs. Wilson's hand, who he possibly mistook for the pilot's wife, "I'll no keep it, you'll take it home wi' you to your lodging; I'll take down your direction, and before to-morrow night my hand to you General Fortesque 'ill go after the portrait himself."

"Be it sae," was the answer, "it was maybe his dochter 'at was drooned, an' likely he wad like to ken a' about her. I can tell him little mair than I've tell't you, but gin its ony pleasure to him to see me, lat him come; I'll tak nane o' his siller; gin it was na 'at I lost my ain, I wad never hae thought o' sellin' that bonny thing. I'm nae ill aff, I'm as independent o' the gentleman as he is o' me; I hae plenty o' siller o' my ain whan I'm at hame, an' they're there 'at 'ill sen' it here in twa three days for a stroke o' the pen."

That night I wrote to Katie in her father-in-law's name desiring her to send ten pounds by the mate of the steamer; and next morning John MacBeth went down to Leith to find out if there was a likelihood of a sailing vessel going to Peterstown soon, so that we might go by sea if possible.

The loss of the money and the excitement consequent on our change of plans made me nervous, and I felt fatigued and ill. The child was asleep in his cradle by my side, and I sat in the easy chair in front of the fire, looking at the portrait which was again hung on the nail above the mantle piece. I had taken quite a liking to the face, it had a sweet smile which spoke of hope, and I felt better as I looked at it.

After his return from the jeweller's the previous evening, John MacBeth shewed me the hidden portrait representing the husband of the fair face outside. That pictured face, the penetrating eye, the firm mouth, seemed to recall to memory one I had seen in a dream, one I knew and yet I knew not, like those shadowy glimpses which come to us all, of a face or a scene we have never known in this life, as if it were a fragment of a former state of existence, the recollection is suddenly called forth by a word or look, to be as swiftly lost again, and nothing left to tell us where we had known the thought that has so quickly passed through the spirit's mind.

"A gentleman wants to see Mr. MacBeth," said Mrs. Wilson opening the room door, and as she did so admitting a tall grey-haired old man. I knew him at once, it was the gentleman who had given me the crown when I was picking up the coals; my face flushed crimson, doubtless the evening I returned the money the servant had followed me and he had come on an errand of charity; he saw my confusion and apologizing for his intrusion, said: "It was Mr. MacBeth, the pilot from Peterstown, he wished to see, and that he had come about a portrait which had been offered for sale at Mr. Redmond's the previous day."

Thus relieved, I begged of him to be seated, and taking down the portrait placed it in his hands, saying that I ex-

pected John MacBeth in shortly, who would relate to him the way in which the picture became his.

The old gentleman chatted pleasantly, and I, now at my ease, enjoyed his society; he kept looking at the portrait from time to time, and I told him that it had been in my possession for the last three years, John MacBeth having given it to me, from fancying that I bore a likeness to it; as I said this he looked earnestly in my face.

“You do indeed bear a likeness to the picture, but you are pale and thin, the one here represented was in the height of her young beauty when this portrait was painted.”

The allusion to my faded appearance made the blood rush to my face.

“My God,” exclaimed he, “the likeness is striking indeed now, your voice too, sounds like an old familiar strain;”—he was interrupted by the entrance of Mr. Laud!—Mr. Laud had not been in the house for many months and I was in hopes that I should never see him again. The old gentleman got up as he entered and they bowed politely to each other.

“You have been sick, Innes,” said Mr. Laud coming towards me and laying his hand fondly on my shoulder as he spoke.

I shrank from his touch as I would from that of an adder, the imaginary love I once felt for him had all departed; dislike and bitter contempt had taken its place.

“You are cold, love,” added he inquiringly.

“No.”

“Then what ails you?”

I pushed my chair back from where he stood and looked in his face with an expression he could not mistake.

“Ah! I see,” and he spoke with a mocking taunting air, “the society of this young gentleman is more congenial to your taste than mine.”

The gentleman thus pointedly alluded to, rose from his seat saying :

"I am intruding here, I will call later in the day when I hope to find Mr. MacBeth within."

I put my hand on his arm, and said with as much firmness as I could assume, while my heart beat almost audibly

"You will confer a great favour upon me by remaining ; that man is my husband, but only in name, he has not been here for many months, and for the last year, he has left myself and my child to starve on what I could earn by making shirts at fourpence-halfpenny each."

Mr. Laud walked gracefully to the door, waving his hat, which he held in his hand, lightly to and fro as he went along, and standing in the open door way, said coolly, "Good bye, Innes, I have come too soon."

Shutting the door quietly behind him, he walked down stairs and remained for some time in the hall talking to Mrs. Wilson. For a few minutes after Mr. Laud left the room the old gentleman seemed lost in thought, and my own heart was too full of the painful past to induce speech ; at last my companion broke the silence :

"Am I right in fancying that I heard the gentleman who has just gone out address you as Innes !"

"That is my name !"

"It is not a common name, may I ask for whom you received it ?"

"For my mother who died in giving me birth."

"Am I presuming too much in asking your mother's maiden name ?"

"Maitland."

"And your father's name is ?"

"My father's name was Dundas, he is dead."

“Your father was Dundas, of the firm of Rogers & Dundas?”

“Yes, of Dundas & Rogers, in Cuba.”

“Bear with me a little further,” this was said in a voice trembling with emotion, “and you were born?”

“In Havana, in the Island of Cuba.”

“Have you any other name than Innes?”

“Yes, Philip Fortesque;” I replied, feeling rather astonished by the pertinacity of his questions.

He clasped his hands tightly together, the unbidden tears rolling down his cheek as he exclaimed :

“Oh! God, how wondrously Thy work is done; my poor child, you are my great granddaughter for whom I have sought with weary foot and aching breast for two years. The daughter of Innes Maitland, my grandchild, who was dearer to me than even her mother, Innes Fortesque, who perished in the wreck of the White Bear, on her way from India, coming home that she might see her child; and console me for the loss of her mother, Agnes Fortesque, whose portrait you so much resemble. And to punish me for my hardness of heart towards your mother, you have been suffering cold and hunger at my very door, while I to expiate my sin heaped my charity on every poor woman or girl I saw.”

The old man folded me to his breast and pressed such kisses on my cheek as long pent up paternal love alone can know, his tears wetting my face.

He went to the child's cradle, and was about to lift the curtain which shaded it, when a noise of shouting, trampling of horses' feet, women screaming, amid cries of “hold back the horses;”—“he'll be murdered,” attracted us both to the window. On looking out I saw Mr. Laud lying on his back on the pavement, a carriage which the horses had

evidently run away with, close by, one axletree broken, and the body of the carriage in smash, while the horses were treading him under foot in their endeavours to pass through the window of the parlour under which his head lay, pawing the air with their fore feet.

Two men from the crowd dragged what seemed the bleeding body of Mr. Laud from between the horses' hind and fore feet, and carried him into the house under the directions of Mrs. Wilson, who was standing at the door when the accident occurred. They brought him bleeding into my room and laid him on the sofa.

A doctor was on the spot almost as soon as he was laid down who administered some restorative, dressed his wounds, and at last succeeded in restoring him to consciousness. On first opening his eyes, he stared wildly, calling out Joseph, Joseph.

Presently recognising me as I knelt by the sofa, exclaimed, as if under the influence of some great excitement: "Innes! you here?—what brought you here?—curse you,—how did you find me out?" He spoke in detached sentences, and with such an effort that it was painful to the beholder.

The physician signed to me to leave him, and I retired to the other end of the room, where my grandfather sat a silent spectator of the scene.

Almost immediately Mr. Laud closed his eyes, gasped with each breath he drew as if he were choking, while his face, naturally pale, became like death. Mrs. Wilson and the doctor were both by his side; the latter bared his left arm and forced his lance several times into a vein. The blood at last came freely, and then he seemed at once to recover his consciousness and to become perfectly aware of where he was and who were about him.

He attempted to raise himself, but was totally unable to

move, he had received some injury in the head and back which incapacitated him from moving either.

He shuddered, gave a look of terror, or rather of horror, and turning his eyes on the doctor, asked if he was a physician.

"I am," was the reply.

"Then tell me if I can recover, and tell me the truth."

"You decrease the chances of your recovery by exciting yourself. Your case requires perfect quiet and stillness."

"Do you think it probable I may die to-night?"

The physician answered not by word or sign.

"Answer me truly, and at once. The fate of another through life will be a grievous one, if I die to-night unforwarned."

"You may die in a few hours, you may live several days. The chances are much against the latter."

He raised his right arm with evident pain, and placing his hand on his brow, shut his eyes for a second; he then looked wildly round the room, letting his eyes rest on the doctor to whom he said:

"Send a man who can be trusted, to Rayton House, it is a mile beyond the old town in the direction of Buccleuch Place: let him see Lady Laud, and tell her that her son lies here dying."

"I will;" said the doctor, "keep as quiet as possible, I shall return in ten minutes, if I find one to do my errand, if not I will go myself; there is no danger while you keep perfectly still."

The doctor did not return in ten minutes, but he did return in an incredibly short time, considering that he brought Lady Laud with him from a mile beyond the old town.

Lady Laud was very tall, nearly six feet high, and proportionably broad, with grizzled hair which she wore in two large

rolls at each side of her temples, her forehead low and broad ; the most piercing black eyes I ever saw. The rest of her features were like her son's, and very faultless. She was dressed in rich silk of an antique fashion, a grey ground with large satin flowers in various colors. Her bonnet was raised in front, although the prevailing fashion was flat,—all this I took in at a glance.

In one hand she carried a long ebony staff tipped and headed with silver, which she used in walking, although certainly not to support her steps ; she entered the room with a firmer tread and a far more stately gait than the young physician who followed her.

She had only advanced a few steps when my grandfather and she recognised each other, and “General Fortesque,” “Lady Laud” came from the lips of each almost simultaneously, the former going towards the lady and saying something expressive of grief for the accident which had been the means of bringing her to the house.

“Another woe ;” said she, but her answer was given more in the troubled expression of her face as she closed her eyes for a moment and compressed her lips rigidly together, than in the words she uttered. The General led her to the sofa where her son lay white as a sheet, but perfectly sensible, his eye as bright and clear as if he had a long life of youth and strength before him.

“Sit down, mother,” said he, “you and these people must listen to what I have to say, while I have yet strength to say it. Come here, Innes, and bring the child.”

“I went to the cradle, and lifting him gently so as not to awake him from his sleep, came to the end of the sofa where Mr. Laud lay, so that he might see us both without an effort, his mother sat on a chair placed for her opposite the middle of

the sofa, while the others stood behind her ladyship, and towards the head of the couch.

"Mother," said Mr. Laud, "this girl has been my lawful wife for two years, and that child is my son, and the heir of my title. This I declare with my dying breath before God and these people; we were married in B—— street Methodist chapel, but I have contrived that all record of our marriage has been destroyed. There were two witnesses present, let them be found and a certificate of marriage made, so that the legitimacy of my child may be established."

While he spoke Lady Laud looked at my face, my person, and the child whom I held in my arms, regarding us both with a look of withering scorn; at last she said, speaking in a voice in unison with the expression of her countenance:

"This then is the governess girl, who has been the curse of your existence? who has been as a millstone round your neck, dragging you down from your own place in society, to a level as low as her own surroundings; and on one of your stolen visits to her, you have met your death." The old woman spoke with a voice and eye as hard as stone.

"Mother," said he, in a voice of entreaty, "promise me that you will care for my wife and see justice done to my child. I have used both cruelly. This is all the reparation I can make. I am your last child—the last Baron of Harford Yettes—will you grant my last request?"

"I will."

These words seemed to come from her breast as if from a hollow rock. She paused for a moment as if a great struggle was passing in her soul, and then added: "Your son shall take your place and your title, so help me God."

Having said these words, she rose from her seat and going to the open window signed to some one outside. In a second

or two an old man entered. Thin and wiry looking in form, and with a face the fierce expression of which seemed increased by the immense thickness of the coarse iron-grey hair that covered his small head, and lay on his narrow forehead.

"Joseph," said his mistress, "assist the doctor to bear Sir Francis to the carriage."

"Madam," broke in the doctor, "he cannot be moved."

"He must be," was the reply as she motioned with her hand to the servant.

"You will hurry on your son's death by doing so," the doctor still urged.

"It is possible," was her reply; "but a knight of Harford Yettes must not die in a hovel such as this."

The doctor said a few words so close to her ear that no one else could understand their import; she waved him off with a sweep of her hand, accompanied by a look of proud surprise, as if astonished by the presumption which could dispute her slightest command, not deigning to answer, but pointing with her forefinger to the couch where her son lay, directing alike the movements of physician and servant by monosyllable and sign.

That proud woman was born to reign, mayhap over fiends or fools, but still to reign; Miss Margaret when she indulged in her high mood used to make me tremble, Lady Laud with fewer words made my soul quake within me; neither were garrulous; Lady Laud, the most silent woman I ever knew; Miss Margaret was a child to her, whose will she could have bent to her own, as the north wind does the fir top.

The patient was lifted upon the mattress of the sofa whereon he lay, General Fortesque and Mrs. Wilson giving the best aid they could; if he suffered pain during his removal he did

not allow a single indication of such to escape his lips, nor did his face change except for an instant by a slight contraction of the brow. He was borne to the carriage and placed there, Lady Laud following and directing the proceedings of each and all who assisted.

When she had seen him placed in the carriage, so as the doctor might support him on one side and Mrs. Wilson without bonnet or shawl on the other, his imperious mother again entered the house, and coming into the room where I stood looking from the open window with the child in my arms; she lifted the handkerchief which still covered the face of the sleeping infant and a look of grim satisfaction softened for an instant her iron features.

She unconsciously muttered "a Laud" in a tone so low as scarcely to be heard by my ear, close to which she spoke as she stooped, looking at the child. Then drawing herself up to her full height, said in a voice of authority as if speaking to her lowest menial: "Young woman, Sir Francis Laud has declared you to be his wedded wife; you are henceforth Lady Laud, and this child will, I fear, in a few hours be a Baronet, head of one of the oldest families in the north of England, and Lord of Harford Yettes. The carriage which now carries myself and son to Rayton House, will return for you and his child, you will become an inmate of my house; and the child an associate of those befitting his rank as my grandson."

She had scarcely finished speaking when John MacBeth advanced from the other side of the room, where he had been a silent though not unobservant witness of all that had taken place for the last half hour, having entered the room immediately after her ladyship's arrival; removing his bonnet, which he usually wore in the house, he bowed in his seaman-like fashion saying:

"My service to your ladyship, I'm John MacBeth the pilot frae Peterstown; I cam a' the way frae the east coast to fess this young leddy hame, an she'll no set ae' fit into your house, gin she be your son's wife or no. She's only his wife in the eye o' men, nae in God's sicht, an' she winna take a step out o' this house, to lile wi' you or him either."

Lady Laud looked as if she would willingly have annihilated him, but deigned not the least reply, and saying "you have heard," with her eyes fixed on my face left the house, and entering the coach with her son they were driven slowly off by Joseph.

The events of the morning had passed in such rapid succession, that I had scarcely time to realize the vast difference they had made in my position; and as I looked round the bare walls of my little room, everything seemed to say, that the scenes I had witnessed and been an actor in, during the last two hours, were visions seen in some wild dream, from which I now awoke scarce knowing whether I wished them to be true or not. John MacBeth was walking up and down the room indulging in a brown study, his hands clasped behind his back; occasionally venting his indignation against Lady Laud in short sentences.

"Gang hame wi' her—na weel than, that wad be a hame an' a half—na, nae ae' fit." At last as a sharp turn in his walk brought him in front of me he said hurriedly:

"Na, na my bairn, ye're better wi' the auld fisherman, than wi' yon rampagin woman; little wad she think to throw ye ower the Elsa Craig gin ye lifted yer little finger the gait she forbade; I dinna doubt but she wad be gude aneuch to the bairn, he's part o' hersel, but for you ye wad hae a sair time o't at the best wi' yon queen o' Sheba, she wad gar ye rin at her beck the mirkest hour o' midnight, gin she took

it in her head. See how she gart decent Mrs. Wilson gang affi' the coach wi' naething bit her mutch on this caul' morning; an' never speert gin she wad gang or no, but jest ordered her in, as gin she had been her servant lass. I wad hae liket weel 'at she had bidden me gang."

My grandfather had entered and was by my side listening to the old man; in a few words I told him of Lady Laud's command that I should go this day and take up my abode with her.

"From what I have seen I do not think this would be your own wish."

"No, I would rather endure again all the privation and misery of the last twelve months than live with Lady Laud."

"Ye're nae needin to dae that," said the pilot, "were nae gran' folk out at the Links o' Peterstown, but we hae plenty meat and fresh air; ye're weel learnt, wi' buke learnin an a' kine o' shewin, an' can win claes to yoursel and the laddie till something casts up."

I rose from my seat and going to the chair where the fisherman now sat, I kissed his cheek twice: "Whatever casts up, I will ever bear for you the same affection I now feel, and I will while I have life and breath remember thee, and all thou hast done for me."

Again seating myself by my grandfather that he might clasp my hand in his as he had done before I rose, I told him briefly all I owed to the old man; how he had sought and found me dying of cold and hunger, stayed by and cared for me; that but for the loss of his money we would now have been on our way to Peterstown; and finally that he was the seaman who had found the portrait.

My grandfather and the pilot conversed for some time on the subject which had fortunately for me been the means of

bringing the former to my home, and when the old man had told all he knew, he was then informed of the relationship in which I stood to General Fortesque.

"The Lord be praised," said he, lifting his bonnet from his head and raising both hands as he spoke. "He has ta'en her out o' the deep waters, and set her feet in a large room; my house wad hae been a refuge fae the storm, but it wad hae been nae right hame for a grand dochter o' auld Mrs. Dundas. Mrs. Dundas was come o' the Duffs, she was a dochter o' Curnel Duff's 'at bade out at the castle o' Learmont, they're the best gentry in our country; my house was atween her an' want, bit naething mair. Its wonderfu'," continued he, "to consider the way that the Lord brings about His ain purpose; gin that picture had gaen down wi' the ane 'at brought it sae far, or gin I had nae tint my siller, ye wad likely never fund ilk ither out; I aye kent Miss Innes was sib to that picture, an' the first time my gude-dochter saw it she said the same;—ye'll be takin' your young leddy hame the nicht, I reckon sir?"

"There is a carriage now, waiting at the door to bring us all to my house, as soon as Mrs. Wilson returns," said the General. "I went in search of it immediately after Lady Laud's departure; I am sure Innes will not willingly consent to go without you, and the best room in my house will hold you its honoured guest."

"Weel, sir, I dare say she wad find herself unca like in your house at first; an' to please Miss Innes I'll gang wi' you an bide a' day; but I'll tak my bed wi' Mrs. Wilson, I am mair at hame here, I'm nae like your house, an it's nae like me; do ye bide far frae this, sir?"

"No," said I, answering in my grandfather's place, "grandpapa lives in the house to which you went with me

last week, where I brought the letter with the crown in it."

"How did you know the house, my child?" inquired my grandfather.

"Because in my poverty I gathered a basket of coals there and you gave me a crown."

"My God," replied he with a look of anguish, "were you the girl who gathered the coals. Many a night that thin worn figure haunted me in my dreams; you had scarcely gone when I would have given twenty pounds to bring you back; the girl whom you spoke to watched for you all day, and when the basket was placed at the door I offered her a pound if she would find you; afterwards when the crown was returned I made the reward five; she was a kind-hearted girl and would gladly have served me in that without reward; we little knew you were so near or that I had such a deep interest in finding you."

Mrs. Wilson returned with the coach which was to bring me to Rayton House. Sir Francis had borne the journey better than the doctor expected; they had sent for their own physician, but the young man who had first attended to his injuries was by the advice of the other medical man to remain all night in the house. Both doctors agreed that there was little hope of his living through the night.

General Fortesque wrote to Lady Laud explaining why I did not return with the coach, informing her of my relation to himself, and that I was to be the future mistress of his house.

Mrs. Wilson expressed herself with heartfelt gladness when told of what she termed my good luck.

I bade my kind landlady goodbye with a certain degree of sorrow; her house had been so long my home and she herself my only friend, that both were dearer to me than I was aware of, but my regret was largely mixed with joy and hope.

I parted with many promises of coming often to visit her, and by five o'clock on this eventful day, I was seated as mistress in the handsomest drawing room I had ever seen.

We had dinner at seven o'clock served in corner and side dishes of silver, and an epergne full of natural flowers, although it was almost winter; the sideboard loaded with plate, and old pictures of ladies and their lords covering the walls, with each of whom I could claim kindred!

We sat long at table, the dinner although a simple one being served in courses; when the last cloth was removed and the wine and fruit placed upon the table my grand-father rose, desiring John MacBeth and I to keep our seats, as he merely went to bring into the room another member of his family.

As he had not before mentioned any one living with him I felt my curiosity a little excited. I was not long in suspense, he soon re-appeared carrying my baby dressed in an embroidered robe and lace cap which must have cost more than all the clothes he and I had worn since his birth.

The child was in good health, and had had a long sleep and a nice supper when he awoke, consequently he behaved himself as if he had been accustomed to be brought in after dinner every day of his little life; especially delighting my grand-father by refusing to be taken away, clinging to the General's neck with all the strength his little arms were capable of.

Before sitting down to dinner, and again at nine o'clock the errand boy was dispatched to enquire for Sir Francis, the answers to both missives (notes written by the General) were alike, he was still alive and did not suffer much.

After dinner, John MacBeth left us to return to Mrs. Wilson's, and, as she informed me, sat for a couple of hours describing what he had seen in a house, which in his eyes was equal to the Queen's palace.

Tea was served in the library, on entering which three full-length portraits were pointed out to me as the likenesses of my mother and two grandmothers. I easily recognized the wife of the General, by the likeness to the picture I had so often looked at for the last two days. The second, Innes Fortesque, was the picture of a very stately young lady inheriting her mother's eyes and hair; dressed in bridal robes, and holding in her hand a portrait of her soldier lover in his scarlet uniform. The third, that of my mother, consisted of a woodland scene in which the principal figure was a young girl far more beautiful than either of the others, with deep grey eyes, and hair the colour of a chestnut full ripe. She was represented sitting on the green sward with an open herbarium in her lap, looking with wistful eye and half unclosed lips to a distant opening in the trees where the head and shoulders of a deer were just visible through the foliage, the beautiful creature drinking from the source of a little brook which flowing from thence almost bathed the rushes at her feet.

"This picture," said the General pointing to the latter, "has been my evening companion for more than twenty years until I have learned to love it with a portion of the love I gave to the original. We have each a story to tell; I will listen to yours first. If you are not too tired you will tell it to me now, you have met with more eventful changes than falls to the lot of most people."

I told him as shortly as I could, what the reader already knows; he listened without a comment until I had finished, and then said:

"There is one part of your story which I cannot understand to have happened without my knowledge, that is the failure of Dundas & Rogers; I am aware of the death of Mr. Rogers, and a confusion of the business consequent on

that event happening unexpectedly, but I do not believe in a failure of the firm; however, that is a thing which will be easily ascertained, and I will take steps for doing so. I am sorry your Dominie Sampson went to India; I wish you had married him instead of that innate villain who now lies dead or dying."

"But Dominie Sampson did not love me, he married another."

"I am not so sure of that, his marriage is most likely a fiction of Laud's. But I am surprised by his going to India without seeing you; you are sure that you read an account of his departure accompanied by his wife before you left Miss Murray's house?"

"Yes, I am certain; Mr. Laud brought me the missionary paper, I read it myself."

"Well now for my own story. My daughter, whose portrait you see here in her marriage dress, was my only child. She was born on the continent, where I was at the time with my regiment; her mother was in delicate health, in consequence of which I sent both mother and child home. When I next saw them, Innes, who bore my mother's name, was sixteen years of age, and the affianced bride of the soldier whose picture she holds in her hand. A year after her marriage her husband's regiment was ordered abroad to India, where she accompanied him, leaving her baby, Innes Maitland, then only two months old, to be first the care and then the solace of her mother and myself, who both felt deeply parting with our only child; my last gift to her was the portrait of her mother and myself, which I have reason to believe she wore from the moment it was given her until it fell from her neck in the fisherman's boat, to be the means, thirty-five years after her death, of discovering to me her grandchild.

"Innes was too delicate for the hot-house life ladies live:

in India, and a year after her arrival there, on hearing the tidings of her mother's death, took her passage in the White Bear that, as she said in the last letter she ever wrote, she might try to console me in a measure for the loss I had sustained, and care for her little one, now a beautiful and thriving child.

Then came the anxious hopeful time when I waited for her coming, and at last the sad news which rang like a death knell on my soul, that the White Bear had perished and all on board with her.

“ Little Innes Maitland grew in beauty and grace and became more dear to me day by day ; and as her happy laugh sounded in my ears, at first in her presence and at last entirely I forgot my grief, in the love I bore for her. She was ever with me ; in that drawing room and in this library she was nursed, at three years old she dined at table. I could not bear her to be out of my sight, and when tidings of her father's death reached me, I felt his loss less in the certainty that now there was no one to take her from me.

“ She never went to school, I would not have her mix with other girls to learn their ways, her nature was perfect beauty to me, and I would not have it altered by associating with those whose minds might be less simple, less noble than her own. The merry echoes which rang through my dwelling made my house a paradise, and when her childish laughter turned to silent maiden smiles, I felt as if there were no Heaven for me happier than this green earth where my darling dwelt.

“ There was to be an end to this, and it came with startling suddenness. She was introduced to your father, and in a few months he had gained her heart and sought her hand. I had no objection to the match, few in Edinburgh would have refused him as a son-in-law, he was upright and noble-

hearted, stern of purpose in the right, with a strong will to do and dare all lawful things for those he loved. He had been already when only twenty-two years of age made a partner in the house which he entered as a boy of sixteen. I gave my consent with hearty good will, rejoicing in the prospect of seeing their children grow up around me, and of having the old home filled with sounds of mirth. I made but one condition, he would live in Edinburgh, and in this house; he started, a shade passed over his brow. I explained, he should be master, I was an old man, I would be the guest of the young people, I already lived almost the life of a recluse; except occasionally a brother officer, I saw no one, the visitors should be theirs, I would retain the library and my own room, the rest of the house should be theirs to all intents and purposes.

"I was answered that this was impossible, his word was pledged, the articles of partnership were still unsigned, unsealed, but no guerdon this world could offer, would tempt him to break his plighted word.

"The other partners in the house, were an old man, and one in delicate health, neither of whom could take his place in the business, it was owing to his knowledge of the latter he had been offered the partnership; no, such a thing was impossible.

"As he uttered these words, I felt that they flowed from a heart whose faith was firm as the rock, that if I gave Innes to him she must be lost to me for years, perhaps for ever, and I gave a decided refusal.

"She had not known him long, I hoped her love was a girlish fancy which would pass away when the object which inspired it was seen no more.

"I forbade her visiting, so that I might feel sure she and

young Dundas would not meet. She obeyed my command, but in her walks she saw him, and a ramble in the King's park or on the Baird hills can foster love which would die in a drawing room, and their hearts were knit together by no common love; he had the head of a man of forty years on the shoulders of a boy; and her life had never known deception, she had lived as truly isolated from the world as a cloistered nun; her nature was too true for her to deceive herself by a fancied love, and I saw she was fading day by day.

"I resolved to give in, I knew that in a few days he must go north to bid his mother farewell, ere he again sailed for Cuba, and I made up my mind that on the morrow I would declare my intention of shutting up the old home, and accompanying them to the West Indies.

"She came twice to kiss and bid me goodbye that night; the last time I kept her hand in mine for a few minutes, I would tell her—no, I would wait till the morrow—alas the morrow never came on which I could touch her hand, or look into her eyes; her ear never listened to my voice again. God help me I cannot speak of her now even at a distance of twenty years but my heart must beat with accelerated pace, and my voice be choked for utterance."

He put his handkerchief to his eyes while his whole frame shook with emotion; I sat still for a few minutes and when his grief had a little subsided, I went close by him and putting one arm round his neck, and laying my cheek to his I said:

"Wont you take me for your Innes now, grandpapa?"

It was the first time I had addressed him so and my voice sounded low and uncertain, as my heart felt; he pressed his lips to my cheek, and placing his hand on my shoulder made me sit on a low fauteuil by his side, saying as he did so:

"I will, my child, and I bless God for sending you to me, but

you cannot fill her place yet, not yet." He again resumed :
" When she was quite a little thing not five years old, she used constantly ask me to buy her pots of flowers, which she took the greatest delight in tending, watering and stirring the earth round their roots every day ; when she grew older I built her a little conservatory attached to a room she called her boudoir, it was opened on her tenth birth day, filled with flowers in full blossom. I shall never forget the voice of delight with which she exclaimed on seeing it : ' Oh ! grandpapa, grandpapa.'

" From that day she every morning brought me a fresh flower ; in winter when the weather was unusually cold sometimes my flowers would be no more than a sprig of wall flower or a daisy, but whether it was a rare rose or a scented leaf it was never forgotten.

" The morning rose bright and glorious, as mornings will rise when men are most wretched. I was early astir, my mind was occupied by thoughts of the many preparations which were to be made in so short a time as now remained, I could not rest, I must be out and abroad ; I was on the Calton Hill ere the sun had fully risen.

" When I returned from my walk, I found, not a single sprig on my breakfast plate but a large bouquet ; I knew she had robbed her conservatory of half its blossoms ; well, the news I had to give would repay her for the flowers she so loved.

" The clock on the mantle shelf pointed to eight, I was impatient to tell my tale, the flowers on my plate told that she had been there in my absence, I took the newspaper to while away the time which would still intervene ere the breakfast hour, a quarter-past eight, would bring my darling to hear the news which I knew would bring the roses to her cheek again.

" The newspaper was in my hand, but while my eyes scanned

its columns my thoughts were far away, otherwise occupied; at last fifteen minutes past,—eighteen, twenty, I rang the bell.

“ Tell Miss Maitland breakfast waits.”

“ Miss Maitland went out to drive two hours ago, sir.”

“ Had a shot passed through my frame the shock could not have been greater. The girl added :

“ ‘ When Miss Maitland brought in your morning flowers, I told her you had already gone out, and she went to your room for a few minutes telling me as she came out not to allow the chambermaid to make up the room till your return.’

“ I sought my own room immediately, and there on the pillow where my head had lain was a little note :

“ ‘ Dear, dear grandpapa, ere you read this I will be married and on my way to visit Mr. Dundas’ mother; I will be back again in two weeks to ask your forgiveness and to live with you in the old home again if you will allow me; even if you do not I will ever be your Innes.’

“ There are times when our evil angel has the ascendant; it was so with me then and for years after. I threw the note into an open drawer, I would punish your father; a thought, devil sent, entered my mind, he had done this for my money; alas! I had to learn in bitterness of soul, when too late, that he could make more money in a few years than I had been able to save during my life time.

“ I would not trust myself to enter the rooms she called her own; God knows the whole house was hers, but I went to the door first of her bedroom and then of her boudoir, locked them up and lodged the key with my banker, as if the rooms were filled with beaten gold.

“ I tried to transfer my love from her to the poor inanimate things that had been hers; I would not that another should

tread the floor or touch aught in these rooms, until time and change of scene had done their work, and I could myself bear to look upon the place her presence had made my heaven.

“By four o'clock that afternoon I was on my way to the continent, from thence I went through upper and lower Egypt, Turkey, the Holy Land, Persia and Arabia, wandering about long weary years, seeking peace and finding none, the companion of my journey that picture without which I never moved.”

He pointed to the picture of my mother, paused for a second or two and then resumed :

“Wherever I halted, if but for a week, it was unpacked, and placed where I could see it every waking hour in which I sought repose for my wearied limbs until it grew my very being.

“For eighteen years I never set foot on British ground nor did I know aught that had befallen her whose picture I was thus worshipping.

“One evening I had become nervous from being confined to the house during the whole day from slight indisposition ; I had not seen my picture for a week ; being detained on my way to Alexandria whither I was directing my course, every day expecting to start again on my route, I had not unpacked it as usual. I fell asleep looking at the case as it was placed against the opposite wall, resolving if I could not proceed on the morrow to have it unpacked ; while thus sleeping in my chair, I dreamt the case opened of itself, and Innes,—not the paint and canvass Innes I carried about with me, but the living and breathing Innes I had fled from only to make my own misery—stepped out and came towards me smiling, as she used to come in her young beauty, and kissed me, saying : —‘ Grandpapa, you must go home and have my rooms made

up for me ; I am coming home, and my rooms that used to be so nice are cold and dusty and my flowers are dead ; when I arrive at home, I will be weary and sick, those shut up rooms would chill me to the heart ; " now mark her last words," ' and the large bedroom to the left of my own, that must be the nursery for my baby boy.'

" I awoke to find it was but a dream, yet that dream or the angel of the covenant who sent it, had restored me to myself, it had chased away the evil one who had reigned in my heart so long ; I had thrown off my fetters, I was my own master ; Innes was restored to her place in my heart ; on my knees I blessed God for my deliverance and earnestly prayed for pardon and forgiveness. The picture was not unpacked from its case until I arrived in Scotland.

" My house was open for me ; the housekeeper, who has been in my service since my wife's death, kept the rooms cleaned and aired, she it was who welcomed me home ; almost the first words I addressed to her were : ' Have you seen Innes ?' The woman stared with a bewildered look as she answered :

" ' Yes, long ago, a fortnight after you went away.'

" ' And not since then ?

" ' Oh, yes, they were a month in Edinburgh, and she came every day and spent the whole forenoon here ; and the last week they both, Mr. Dundas and Miss Innes, came every evening also ; she always asked the first thing when she came in " Is grandpapa come," and the last words in going away were always, " Dear Mrs. Howard, when grandpapa comes, the very moment, send to let me know."

" ' I wished them to occupy rooms here, it did not look seemly to me that they should live in Kay's hotel and their own home empty ; but she said, " They would come when you came home, not before."

“The last day they were in Edinburgh,—they were only to stay a week first, and they stayed a month, their^d departure was put off from week to week in hopes you would come—she was all day in the house, from early morning until ten at night, the hour when the boat sailed.

“I made them a nice dinner and saw the table waited myself, but its little of it they ate, her heart was too full to eat and he could not eat for watching her; many a time she came to my room that day, to give me a new message to deliver when you would come, and she would always end by saying: “But perhaps he’ll come to-night, Howard, do you think he’ll come?”

“All that month, during the time she was here, her orders were that no one should open the hall door to a rap but her, we had few visitors for every one knew that you were away, but when a rap came she would run down stairs as if her feet had wings, so that she might let you in and be the first to welcome you home. Towards evening, the last day, Mr. Dundas went out and brought home a damask rose in full blossom, there were ten roses on it and fifteen buds, and rejoiced she was to see it. “This will speak to him for me:” she said, “and even if he does not come for a month some of these buds will be in bloom.”

“It was placed by her own hands on the little table in the library window, and beside it a book with a mark she worked and put in the place she wanted you to read; she drew your arm chair close to it, and there they are still, chair and book and rose tree, it never bears roses now, but it has plenty of leaves yet; she placed upon the book a thick letter of which she wrote a few lines every now and then all that day, I never lifted the one or the other even to dust them since they were placed there by her hand. “Do not let any one

touch them until grandpapa comes home," said she, "I wish him to find them just as they were left by me."

"When ten o'clock came and she was at last going she put her arms round my neck, and kissed me, her face wet with tears, and said in a low voice so as her husband couldn't hear, "Perhaps when grandpapa comes home he wont write at once, but you will, Howard, and tell me what he says and how he looks."

"I promised I would, and so I did write, but I never could tell her that you had come home."

"When Mrs. Howard ceased speaking I went into the library. I found the table just as she had described it, with the addition of a white cloth covering the book and letter put there by my careful housekeeper that they might be kept from both sun and dust.

"I read my darling's letter with hopeful tears then, I doubted not, but she would soon be my companion again; on the mark was sewed these words: "Bless me, even me also, oh my father;" the book was my own Bible open at the parting of Laban and Jacob, the mark placed on those words, "the Lord watch between thee and me, when we are parted the one from the other."

"Mrs. Howard opened a drawer in that cabinet, and gave me two packets of letters, in all twenty, each written in full hope that it would surely find me in the old home; although those formerly written had received no other answer than the constantly recurring one from Howard; "he has not come." The one of latest date contained these words in several places; "if you receive this letter," and before concluding she said, "in six months I will be back in Bonnie Edinburgh and I will never leave it till you come home."

"I did not read all the letters then, but I did with a worn

and weary heart many times over afterwards. I looked at the date of each, and then asked if there were no others?

"No, Miss Maitland never wrote again."

"I read the last through, it was dated sixteen years before, what could it mean, that could not have been her last; I was sure she must have written again; I went to the drawer from which Howard took the letters, as if there I would find a solution of the mystery which pained me so much.

"There lay two letters in black-edged envelopes! I was answered, I knew all, how eloquently those unopened silent missives spoke. I lifted both, walked to the window where she had placed my chair and sat down to wipe the perspiration which stood in large drops on my brow.

"The first I opened was an intimation of her death dated two days later than her last letter. The other was from your father written a fortnight after her death, when he had buried the wife of his youth; it contained few words, but these shewed a brave heart struggling with a deep woe. He told me of your birth, and of a promise made to your mother, that you should bear my name and that the care of your childhood and youth, when old enough to be sent home, should be offered to me. He added: "I have fulfilled my promise, the child's name is Innes Philip Fortesque, you shall have the charge of her, and she shall fill her mother's place in your house, if you wish it to be so."

"These letters had lain sixteen years unanswered; what a fool I had been, I had sown the wind, I was now reaping the whirlwind.

"I wrote to your father at Cuba explaining all, and lamenting bitterly the great error of my life. I now claimed the fulfilment of his promise that you should live with me, and informing him I had already made you my heir. My answer

was from a stranger, saying that Mr. Dundas died in Scotland from an accident many years before, that soon after his death the firm passed into new hands; that his daughter had no interest in the house, and that no one there knew anything of her whereabouts.

“Sometime afterwards I discovered your relationship to Captain Young of Peterstown; I went there and was informed by Mrs. Young of your residence with Miss Murray and of your having married without their approval; on applying to Miss Murray, I was received by that lady in person who seemed much annoyed by the questioning I subjected her to, said that she knew nothing whatever of Miss Dundas, that she was equally ignorant with Mrs. Young of your husband’s name, that sometimes letters came for you there, but were always called for by a man late at night. She was evidently fearful of being brought into trouble on your account, and by an inadvertant allusion to Mrs. Young I gathered that she had been warned by that lady, to be on her guard and be as silent as possible.

“I offered her a handsome sum to detain the man who came for the letters so that I might see him; I went there every week, but always with uniform success. Since then I have advertized for you in every paper in Edinburgh feeling certain you were still here. Every day I left my house to wander in a given direction, with slow step, listening eagerly to every word I heard, and peering into the face of every young woman I saw in hopes of finding my lost child, whom but for the lost portrait I might never have seen.

“I have been at least fifty times in the very street where you lived; so often, that I had picked up a bowing acquaintance with Maida.’

CHAPTER IV.

*"In words like weeds I'll wrap me o'er,
Like coarsest clothes against the cold,
But that large grief which these enfold,
Is given in outline and no more."*

My grandfather went several times to ask for Sir Francis. He still lingered on; when four days had passed the physicians began to entertain hopes of his ultimate recovery.

My grandfather wished me to visit him, I shrank from this, it was at best a mere form, I loathed and dreaded him, I had cause; but I allowed myself to be persuaded into going on being told that if he wished to do so, he could take the child from me; the General had a high opinion of Lady Laud, and desired that I should stand well in her favour.

On our arrival at Rayton House, I was struck with the bareness and want of comfort which seemed to prevail there both outside and in. The little shrubbery in which the house stood seemed as if it had been left to its own resources for years, the walks overgrown with tufted, rugged grass; the trees unpruned, and flowers and weeds in promiscuous confusion; while inside, the oil cloths were worn and patched, the carpets scanty, and the furniture, consisting of upright high-backed chairs, placed close to the walls, thin legged tables guiltless of ornament or book, and faded curtains, contrasted strangely with the house I had just left where every thing was handsome and in profusion.

Lady Laud received us with dignified urbanity, but it was evident that even now when she knew I was her son's equal in

point of birth, she could not look upon the dressmaker girl (which she was now made aware I had been, and not a governess) but as an intruder into her family ; every now and then I was conscious of a scrutinizing glance making me feel awkward and ill at ease.

We were brought by her ladyship into a parlour in which her son still lay on the couch where he had been placed when taken home. He was very pale, but otherwise had in my eyes no look of a dying man ; he acknowledged our presence by a single word and an inclination more of the eye than the head.

My grandfather placed a chair for me in front of the couch where Sir Francis lay, he and Lady Laud sitting nearly at the other end of the room ; they spoke low, but such sentences as the following reached my ear :

“ I had fondly hoped he would have retrieved the fortunes of our house by marriage ”—“ Lady Blanch Baulford ”—“ ten thousand a year ”—“ regrets his false step bitterly. ” Eighteen months before these words would have caused a sorrow so deep as to leave no tears to shed ; when then heard I deemed them of so little account as not to be worth a tear.

While the last sentence still lingered in my ear, I looked at Sir Francis, his eyes were fixed on my face with a look of such withering hate as made my blood run cold.

On our return home, we found John MacBeth waiting to bid us good bye ; he had found a sailing vessel bound for Peterstown, and was to leave Leith with the evening tide.

He went loaded with gifts for every one in his cottage home ; General Fortesque presenting John himself with an immense gold repeater, chain and seals ; it was accepted without many words, but twice during his short stay I saw it drawn from his pocket to be locked at ; dear old man, twice

my saviour from death and despair ! I parted from him at the ship's side with fond regret, although I had one by me whom I was beginning to love dearly, and who I knew would be my shield from all ill.

Sir Francis Laud grew better day by day, until he was declared by his physician to be out of danger, and sent to spend the winter in a warmer clime. His stately mother came more and more frequently to see me, each time despite her *hauteur*, gaining on my esteem. We kept no carriage, Lady Laud did, and came frequently to take myself and the child for a drive. I enjoyed these drives exceedingly, she had a richly cultivated mind, and whether passing along the streets of the old towns or by the objects of interest in the neighbourhood, had always something to tell of those who centuries before had lived and loved, and alas also hated, who had gone down into the grave and left their places to be filled by others indulging in like passions in the nineteenth century, to follow in their footsteps.

I do not recollect that in all my intercourse with Lady Laud I ever heard her allude to the future, even of it in any way. She seemed to live in the past and dwelt more on the past greatness of her husband's family than aught else. She was a cousin of Sir Robert Laud whom she married. He was the youngest of two brothers, the eldest of whom she told me died many years before, after having lived a life of careless extravagance on the continent, by which he had reduced his already impoverished estate to such a degree that it was necessary to sell the unentailed portion of the land. The consequence was, that when Sir Robert became proprietor and soon after died, Lady Laud was obliged to establish her household on principles of the most rigid economy.

She had three sons, of whom Sir Francis was the youngest

and only surviving, the eldest died when a boy, I felt sure by some violent death, although I never heard her talk of it, but on two occasions when he was casually alluded to by visitors whom she had known during her early married life, I saw her shudder and become pale.

Soon after Sir Francis' departure for the continent, Lady Rawdon, a sister of Lady Laud's, paid her a visit of three days, one of which I spent at Rayton House. The afternoon was raw and cold and in consequence we had not our usual pleasant drive; we all sat by the fire in the large cold drawing room. Philip, my little boy, had fallen asleep on the sofa, and Lady Laud would not allow him to be removed, throwing a shawl over him; I went to the sofa and sat close to the child so that I might keep him warm and shield him from the draught.

The two sisters who were alone by the fire talked of other days and of the dead.

"Nothing seems to have gone right since Sir Robert's death," said Lady Rawdon.

"Nothing went right before it," was the reply of Lady Laud in a bitter tone; "he was fit for nothing either good or ill; Francis was never more vacillating than his father."

"He's his father in many points, certainly, and so was Harry. Poor Charlie, who ought to have been the baronet, was the one who most resembled the old Lauds; had he lived doubtless Harford Yettes would yet have been a great name in the land."

"For God's sake do not speak of him," said Lady Laud, with an emotion I had deemed her incapable of, "the thoughts his very name conjures up will I believe yet drive me crazy."

"I don't believe he's dead," replied her sister, "no one

ever saw him dead, no one saw him since he left the breakfast table that morning. God knows he was well and handsome and beautiful then."

"Yes, he is dead, dead," said my mother-in-law, sitting upright in her chair, her arms folded across her breast, as if she would keep down the thoughts which rose unbidden there, "and to have him alive again I would give my hopes of heaven, if there be such a place."

"God preserve us! If there be such a place? What do you mean Constance? Surely there is, everybody knows that."

"Who told everybody?"

"Why, the Bible says so."

"And how do you know that the Bible is true?"

"Because men with wiser heads than you or I, who have made it their life-long study, say so."

"Has any one come back from that far-off land of mystery to tell that it is a reality?"

This was asked with a scoffing look and voice which, when thought of in connection with the subject she spoke of, made me shudder.

"Yes, I believe there have; it is the belief of all people, all tribes, all tongues, that their dead do come again, at rare intervals it may be, but they do come; this would not be the universal belief if it were founded on a lie; and apart from what others tell us, are we not all conscious of a dread, of we know not what; a horror of great darkness which makes the hair of our flesh stand up as did that of the holy man of old. It is not because of the darkness; we are enveloped in that misty shroud every night of our lives; it is because of the hidden things then near us, we shrink and shiver."

"True;" was the answer, in the same scoffing accent as before, "and it is also true that we shudder in the day as in

the night, when the spirits of evil are around us, the devils who watch that they may make us work their will."

"Your own words defeat your argument. If the souls of men live not again why should the devils trouble themselves to lead men into evil? You have been a strange woman all your life, Constance; ever striving to lead others, never suffering yourself to be led, and what has come of it? have you been happier or more prosperous than others? have not all your schemes signally failed? have a care lest this damning belief lead you on until you open your eyes in torment to know, but too truly, that the soul of man cannot die."

"Would it may be as you say. Sometimes I have thought it possible; yet, when I look at the starry heavens and the millions of worlds there, I laugh at the presumption of puny man fancying himself immortal. Oh that it were true; I would gladly spend eternity in the torments you speak of, were I sure that Charlie lives in the heaven you believe in. Oh! it is too good news to be true."

She put both her hands on her face, making the points of her fingers press on her eyes, as if to shut out something she would not see, sitting thus for some minutes, while her sister gazed on her with an expression of unutterable concern. At last Lady Laud seemed to recover herself; uncovering her face and turning round so as to look into her sister's eyes, she said in a voice that sounded most unearthly in its solemnity:

"Maud, you must never again talk to me of Charlie; every day of my life I strive to forget him, and every day he is more vividly before me than the last; because I have spoken of him now, my head will not press my pillow to-night, I will pass the weary hours with restless feet pacing to and fro in my chamber."

As she finished speaking, Lady Laud got up and left the

room. Lady Rawdon sat as if lost in thought; a murmured sound from the child's lips as he lay asleep, drew her eyes to where I sat, and starting as if then only conscious of my presence, came and seated herself by me on the sofa.

"Lady Laud has had a troubled life," said she as if she would apologize for the sentiments which her sister had uttered so freely. "We are a proud race. She and I are Lauds, the children of Sir Robert's uncle; pride of birth is our inheritance, and the mantle of the house seems to have fallen in deeper folds on Constance than even on those who have gone before her. She has been woefully disappointed in her family; Sir Robert's death was doubtless a heavy blow," (I had my own doubts of this from what I had heard during the past half hour) "and she lost another son, a promising boy, the image of Sir Francis; but her life woe has been in the loss for we cannot say the death of her eldest son, a loss the most unaccountable, enveloped in the greatest mystery, in a place and under circumstances where one would suppose no mystery could exist.

"I was with my husband on a visit at Harford Yettes at the time. It was a lovely summer morning, we had just finished breakfast, and were lingering at table over the newspapers and letters for which Sir Robert had ridden to the village in the morning.

"Lady Laud rose and calling to Charlie went with him to the door leading out to the garden, desiring Joseph who was then the gardener to assist him in planting some fruit trees in his own little plot of ground, returning at once to the parlour.

"There is in the house an epileptic boy, almost a fool, who is a relation of the family; this boy, Lady Laud had always been particularly kind to; and noble-hearted Charlie was

equally so, constantly taking the poor simpleton about with him.

“When my sister re-entered the parlour, she desired Godfrey go to the play room where he would find a scarlet ball she made for him the evening before.”

“He immediately ran off but returned in a few minutes searching for somethings belonging to Charlie

“‘Go for your ball, Godfrey,’ said I.

“‘Charlie has gone,’ was his reply.

“Lady Laud became as pale as death and left the room instantly. I have never spoken to her on the subject, altho’ I felt inclined to do so to-night, but I have ever felt convinced that a presentiment of evil happening to the boy entered her mind on the moment; however this may be, Charlie was never seen again, and since that day his mother’s face has borne the same stern anxious look it now wears. I never saw her smile or weep afterwards: every room in the house from attic to cellar, every nook in garden and shrubbery, every hill side and valley were in vain searched for Charlie.

“The pine which we had hoped was to crown our mountain, the glory of our garden, our kingly bird was lost, gone for ever, and no trace of him, not a shred of his garment was ever seen.

“His mother lay with closed eyes and folded hands for days; and months passed ere I could feel myself justified in leaving her, although I then had much to do at my own fire-side.

“The old man, Joseph, mourned for the Baron of Brackley as he used to call Charlie (the Lauds were Barons of Brackley in the old time) until he almost lost his sight, and from a hearty cheerful man became the morose unsightly being he now is. Joseph has been an attached servant of

the house all his days, as his father was before him, but except to Charlie, he never manifested any liking for the individual members of the family; he served them well, because they were Lauds, not from any other feeling, but to Charlie's call he would have replied, and done his behest had Sir Robert himself been unanswered. I have often heard him say, 'I could go through the water at midnight for the Baron of Brackley.'

"He was not alone there; Charlie gained the love of every one he came in contact with, even poor silly Godfrey used to go about the grounds for years after he was lost crying in his simple way, 'Come back Baron, Baron come back.'"

CHAPTER V.

“ Every heart its bitterness knows,
Each has its hidden care,
And no eye can pierce the hidden veil
That covers our life like a pall,
But His who heareth our prayers and tears,
Who readeth and judgeth all.”

L. T. AHERN.

LADY LAUD sent me home early that night ; I was glad to go ; the house was always silent and dull and cold there, but that evening a cloud more sombre than usual seemed to have settled on both house and inmates.

The story of the Baron had given me food for thought in wondering what could have become of the boy. Some one must know, it did not seem likely that he was dead, if so his body must have been found ere now ; it was as Lady Rawdon had said, a story enveloped in mystery. Mystery indeed, a story the more one thought over the more unfathomable it seemed ; a gem lost from some swiftly sailing ship down down in the deep sea where the diver cannot go ; water spilt on the shifting sand ; a cloud on the noonday sky ; none more surely, more hopelessly lost than Charlie. I felt that if ever I went to Hartford Yettes I should like to set myself the task of solving this mystery.

I fancied myself a favourite with Lady Laud, at all events she was a great favourite with me, and the story I had just heard had deepened the feeling by exciting my sympathy. Poor Lady Laud ! no wonder she was so stern, she had suffered deeply ; and I half suspected she knew nearly as much of Sir Francis' character as I ; these were strange words of hers,

“Francis was never more vacillating than his father, unfit alike for good or ill.”

I occupied the apartments which had been my mother's, with the addition of a large room for a nursery; everything around me was in profusion, and elegant beyond what I had ever been accustomed to; my grandfather was kind and indulgent, care for the morrow was gone, my baby thriving and joyous as a fawn; yet with all this I spent many hours of each day wearily wandering from room to room; I tried to pass my time in reading the novels of the day which Lady Laud brought for my amusement, but after the real troubles of my past life, the imaginary woes of romances possessed no charm.

I tried worsted work, bead work, and the various other devices in which ladies try to pass the time which hang so heavy on the hands and oppress the hearts of so many of the daughters of the opulent, all were in vain; I visited among the friends introduced to me by my grandfather, walked out every day with Philip and his nurse, yet with all I could do to combat against a feeling which I feared was both selfish and sinful, I was day by day pining with ennui; I was happier far when I used to sit writing from morn to night earning the bread of myself and child.

I wanted to feel that I filled the place I was sent into the world to fill; I felt that I was not created to be the nonentity I was; I required employment that must be done, done by myself and for a purpose, work to be done in the precious hours which God never intended should be wasted by any one. How often I have thought while sighing for something to do, of these words “they rest not day or night.” I could well understand how this constant state of action would be one of happiness; how often I wished that my Grandfather had

been poor ; not in poverty, I had had enough of that, but in circumstances in which my exerting the talents which God had given me to be used, not hid in a napkin, would have been considered meritorious, not a disgrace.

Why is it that the daughters of the opulent and even of those who are only *supposed* to be so, must pass their days in vapid idleness, minds and hands alike unemployed, while their brothers and fathers toil unremittingly ? I speak not of married women, (the wives of men in moderate circumstances), every such woman, has, or ought to have, sufficient to employ herself in the cares of her household, if she is willing to discharge these faithfully, and this true devotion to her duties as a wife and mother must not be the result of a mere desire to perform her *duty*, it must proceed from a well-spring of love in her heart which makes it necessary to her own happiness that she devotes her best energy to further the welfare and happiness of the husband and children whom God hath given her, this is one of *woman's rights* which she must by no means give to another ; a true wife can have no identity wholly her own, no separate existence apart from her husband and children.

This is a strong assertion, but I cannot retract one word from it. I cannot express in mere written words how sure I am that it is so, and that the acceptance of this God-given truth is the root of real happiness for women. I have diverged from my subject. I would speak of those who in like position with myself are the daughters in a house where there is no need for their time in making or mending, no sweeping or dusting, nor even a necessity for overseeing such things ; absolutely nothing for tens of thousands, of heads all of average or more than average capacity, and a like number of willing hands ; but to read novels, make useless fancy work

(it must not be for sale), or any other harmless way in which the time may be passed, that, do what they will, hangs so heavily, lags so wearily.

May not the reason why there are so many ill-ordered households in the land, so many comfortless dinners made from food purchased in the best markets and at the highest price, because all is left to the care and supervision of menials, the half of whom are totally unfitted to perform the work they have engaged to do,—may not this be traced to the listless, unprofitable, untutored lives which almost without exception the daughters of those who wish to be considered the upper class of society are condemned to live, thereby unfitting them, both mentally and physically for the duties which every wife and mother in the land ought to perform; ought, more or less, to take upon herself; and this not from any laziness or desire of inaction in themselves; no, there are thousands in the length and breadth of the land, I may safely say in nine cases out of ten, who would most gladly rise up and help fathers and brothers in the battle of life; win bread for themselves and those who are dear to them; but the voice of society is directly opposed to such a thing; by doing so they would be ignored by their own class, their fathers and brothers looked upon as ogres.

It may not be necessary for every woman to do the work or even part of the work of her house; but it is absolutely necessary that she should see it done; and to be able to do so efficiently she must be able to do it herself. In the good time coming when sense and worth will hold their own place, mothers will see to it that their daughters know the exact time required to roast a joint of meat, and boil (not spoil) a potatoe; this need not interfere with music or drawing lessons, if they evince a taste for such, if not, these accomplish-

ments are better left alone. Let every girl be taught enough of Latin to understand the rules of her own language, and by all means as many of the Continental tongues as she is willing or has an opportunity of acquiring.

In addition let her learn fancy work, so that she may adorn her home with these nameless trifles which go so far in making it pleasant to the eye ; and above all things let us divest ourselves of the idea that a lady must not even assist in earning her own bread. Young ladies in Germany and France do so and are respected therefore ; why is it that a free born Briton, dare not use her birthright of liberty in earning for herself even clothing, which in many cases she must want because her father's income is insufficient to supply, and the voice of the little world around her has declared it to be ungenteeled for a lady to earn money ?

Let some brave-hearted girl throw off these shackles which now tie her down to a life of weary inaction ; and reasoning from all analogy, in twenty years she will have found five hundred others to follow her example.

I and Philip had been spending the day at Lady Laud's ; the evening fell dark and blustering, in consequence of which we returned early ; it was getting dark as we arrived at home, grandpapa was in the library ; I did not wait to put off my hat and cloak, but as I always did, went first to kiss him and tell him all the news I had heard in my absence.

There were no candles in the room, but a bright fire in the grate, notwithstanding which, I did not at first observe there was a stranger seated at the other side of the fire place opposite to where my grandfather sat.

"Where is Philip," asked my grandfather.

"I sent him to have his things taken of, because you

always kiss him first and I don't like that," and saying so I kissed him again on both cheeks.

"He'll soon be a big boy, and one can't kiss a big boy, but you will never grow too big to kiss, is that not true?" added he looking past me, as if the latter part of his speech was addressed to some one else.

I turned round and there in the ruddy fire light sat Dominic Sampson! He must have recognized my voice, as the moment I turned round and the light fell on my face he rose. I was beside him in a moment and clasping tightly the large hand stretched out to meet mine.

"Dominic Sampson! when did you come back? I thought I would never see you more. Grandpapa this is Dominic Sampson," burst from my lips all at once.

"The deuce it is," said the former in a tone of surprise, "this is a new phase in your character, Mr. Tytler: have you been playing a hero of romance by acting two parts, and under such a grotesque name too?"

"I had little to do with the name," replied my tutor, "and at first did not relish it, although there are circumstances in which those who eat the bread of dependence must submit to things more disagreeable; but just now it was the sweetest sound I ever heard.

"This young lady was my best-loved pupil in the house where I received the name of Dominic Sampson, and for two years back I have never been in Edinburgh without passing the greater part of my time in searching for her. It was because I fancied I had found a clue to her, that I could not accept of your invitation for dinner yesterday or breakfast this morning; half an hour has scarce elapsed since I found I was again doomed to disappointment. I little thought I should have found her here; is Innes the grandchild you spoke of

"Yes, your old pupil is the light of my old eyes, and had I not believed the name of her tutor to be Sampson, you might have sooner met."

"But," said I, "how could you have searched for me for two years back when you were in Benares?"

"In Benares! what made you fancy I was there?"

"Because a connection of ours, who is no friend, told her so," said my grandfather. "The innate villain, I fancied one part of his story was a lie, and now it seems both are his own invention."

My grandfather could not endure Sir Francis, I had no cause to love him, and by tacit agreement we never spoke of him; just then we would both gladly have avoided the subject.

Taking out his watch General Fortesque said, "It is almost the dinner hour; come, Mr. Tytler, I will show you to your room, now you have found a friend in Innes, you will not object to taking up your abode with us during your stay in Edinburgh as you have so often promised to do."

I sat during dinner in mute surprise at the change which had taken place in Mr. Tytler; how different from the one I had known as Dominie Sampson, with his ill-fitting clothes; he had put off his awkward shyness, his silence, every thing which made him fit his old name; his dress was that of a clergyman and a gentleman; in his manners he was easy and unconstrained as was my grandfather, and he spoke with a confidence in his own powers, signally different from the silent, constrained, almost sullen manner he invariably wore in Peterstown.

After dinner grandpapa always took a nap in his great chair by the dining room fire, coming into the drawing room with the tea at nine o'clock. When I rose from table I was followed by Mr. Tytler.

On entering the drawing room he drew a chair in front of the sofa where I had seated myself, and sitting down took my hand, saying as he did so :

“ I am now going to say something to my best loved which she will answer to-morrow ere I depart for Ballenfold.”

“ Are you married ?” said I, interrupting and looking him full in the face.

“ Married,” repeated he smiling, “ you know I am not ; is this the other part of your friend’s story which General Fortesque alluded to ? No I have never seen one I could love except yourself ; and although I promised to offer you a home in my house, when I had one fit for you, yet it was only then with a view to my sisters keeping my house and so making a happy home for you, until you formed a dearer connection. Although I loved you as I knew I could not love another, I had no hopes of your loving the great ungainly man, whose clothes and person were the subject of ridicule to your cousins, and only when I saw you shed such bitter tears in parting from me, and heard you express the feelings which called them forth, did the hope that I had won your heart come to cheer me on my way. Since then the desire of winning you to bless my home has been with me day and night, strengthening me in the battle of life, and making me rejoice doubly in the hour of success. I heard from Tom with whom I corresponded, as long as he would answer my letters, of the failure of Dundas & Rogers. Selfish that I was, I rejoiced when I heard of it ; I knew that your money gone, if I gained your own consent to be my wife, it would be no difficult matter to obtain Mrs. Young’s approval ; added to this I had even while a boy a settled dislike to marrying a wife with money. I have naturally great self-reliance ; I knew that I was able to win a

comfortable home for my wife without help from any one ; I wish to owe no one aught save love. Now I have a home to offer better than most men of my profession acquire after long years of toil and waiting, not won by any merit of my own, but given me by the voice of a partial people who called me to be their pastor ; will you share this home with me ? Innes will you be my wife ?”

I could not answer ; my tongue clove to the roof of my mouth, and my heart was oppressed with anguish ; I had lost the one I loved best, the one I was very sure loved me best, by my own heedless folly. The happiness of my life was within my grasp, and because I would not watch and wait, but trifle with the first butterfly that crossed my path, it had fallen from my grasp ; I saw it floating, floating down the stream and I standing on the brink gazing with hot tearless eyes on what never could be mine again.

I shut my eyes in hopeless misery, and laid my face on his shoulder, pressing it there for the first as I knew it would be the last time ; I could not speak and tell him my woe and folly ; he would hear it all too soon.

“ I know what clouds my darling’s brow,” said he, “ but fear not, dearest, I do not wish to take you from the discharge of the sacred duty which has devolved upon you, nor is it necessary ; the early days of your grandfather were spent in the manse which I now occupy, and on my first introduction to him in our Hall of Assembly two years ago he used these words, which seem now so ominous of happiness : “ If I had the choice of where I would like to end my days it would fall on the spot where they began, in the manse of Ballenfold ; will you take me to live with you Mr. Tytler ? The manse of Ballenfold ; the wall-flower covered walls encircling its garden, and the great trees in front full of rooks

cawing early and late to their young, is the only place on this earth, where my memory can go back without a sting."

There was a long pause, I could not summon courage yet, to speak my doom, he resumed :

"For the last two years, I have been spending every day I could spare from my duties in wandering about Edinburgh seeking you. When I received the incumbency of Ballenfo'd, the first step I took was to go to Peterstown, and there I learned from Mrs. Young you were in Edinburgh ; I came here on my way home, I fancied then I could not rest until I had seen you ; on going to Miss Murray's I was informed that you had left there some time before ; the girl who spoke to me saying that no one there knew where you had gone."

He again paused ; my voice came back—my heart grew strong—I would tell him all—he must know—it was better he should know now.

I rose from my seat, went to the window and looked out on the cold hard stones of the street, not so cold as my own heart, then with all my might steeling my heart to bear me through, I sat down beside him as before and said with a clear voice :

"I will love you while I have breath, better than I love myself ; when I do not love you, I will have ceased to be ; but I cannot be your wife." I paused, for breath. "During the first year I spent in Edinburgh, I went about every Sabbath from one Presbyterian Church to another in hopes of meeting you ; my weekday thoughts, as I sat sewing from Monday morning until Saturday night were all of you ; every spare minute I studied the lessons you left for me to learn. A year after I came, you preached in Dr. Murison's Church. The day was rainy and cold, but I would not go home in the interval of worship, lest I could not return for the afternoon service ; my waiting proved in vain, I did not see you again.

Next morning I went to Dr. Murison's in hopes of finding you, and was a second time disappointed. On leaving the cottage I met my cousin Tom Young, who introduced me to a friend of his ; with them I visited Holyrood palace. Tom's friend won my confidence, and ere we parted I told him why I had come to Leith walk, and of my anxiety to find you ; he promised to discover when you would preach in Edinburgh, and where."

In as few words as possible I told him, how when the time seemed ripe for it, I was informed of his marriage and his departure for Benares ; I said little of my sorrow for his loss, I saw he was reading my heart and knew what was written on every page. I told him of the time in which I earned my bread as a shirt maker, and of my discovery by my grandfather.

When I had finished speaking, he rose and coming towards me, laid his hand on my head as in the old time, saying :

"It were idle to tell you of my day dreams, they are over now, you cannot be my wife, but you can never be less dear to me than you were and are ; it is possible that in the chances and changes of this world, you may yet need a friend with a younger frame and stouter arm than General Fortesque ; should it be so, you will send to me as to a brother or father."

"I will."

We never spoke on the subject again, but when I sought my room, I, the wife of one man, spent the night in walking to and fro, and weeping bitter tears for another.

CHAPTER VI.

*"Up sorrowing one,
Shake off this gloomy weight of doubt and fear,
Trust though dark clouds may lower, that yet the sun
With gladness shall appear."*

I WAS in poor health all that winter, and as the spring advanced towards summer, I seemed to be losing the little strength I had. My grandfather consulted more than one physician and it was decided I must have change of air and scene.

It was proposed that we should visit Cheltenham or Bath, both places favourite summer resorts of General Fortesque during my mother's residence in Edinburgh; but Lady Laud did not approve of my going to either, and under her directions, the proposal was negatived by myself; she had acquired an almost unbounded sway over me without apparently making a single effort to do so. In her accounts of the past she spoke of herself, never of what she had done or felt, yet each anecdote unfolded something in her character to admire and respect.

I did not love Lady Laud but I felt as if this was more my fault than hers, a want in myself, and that if she took the trouble she could make any one love her; she seemed to me then, so noble in the unselfish devotion she had manifested towards a husband and two sons not one of whom from all I could learn was worthy of her; her hauteur was evidently the result of repressed disdain for the unworthy and vain she had been thrown among.

I used frequently to find her gaze fixed on my face with

an intense earnestness as if she would read there the ideas passing in my soul ; once on suddenly raising my eyes to her face I started to find there the very look of hate I had seen on her son's the day I visited him in his sickness ; that look of her's haunted me and made me uncomfortable for days.

It was very plain Lady Laud did not wish me to leave home except in her own society ; she was obliged to remain in Edinburgh until August, and at last it became evident, even to myself, that if I continued to decrease in strength as I had done for some months back, in August it would be too late ; my mother-in-law did not see it in this light, she said there was no fear, I was ne vous, that was all.

My grandfather was of a different opinion, he was evidently most uneasy ; instead of indulging in his usual sleep after dinner he would follow me to the drawing room bringing whatever he fancied most tempting from the desert, and trying to make me eat. He gave up his afternoon walk and instead drove out with me ; we frequently visited my good friend Mrs. Wilson, whose house was now well furnished (by my grandfather) and with little trouble she was saving money. On our way home from one of those visits we talked of John MacBeth from whom Mrs. Wilson had that morning received a letter. I was thinking of my young days and wishing I could see Peterstown again ; almost unconsciously I said so.

"Do you," replied my grandfather, "then we shall go to-morrow."

He feared my having an interview with Lady Laud ; he knew that she would not approve of my leaving Edinburgh, and from the influence she had over me, were she to offer the least objection, I would not go. "I will myself," said he, "inform Lady Laud of our departure, we shall go to-morrow by the mail which leaves this at eight in the morning."

We travelled by easy stages more like drives than aught else, and before we reached Peterstown I felt so strong as to make me doubt if I had been ill, or only fancying myself so, as I knew Lady Laud thought I did.

When within a day or two's journey of our destination I wrote to my aunt informing her of our intended visit to Peterstown, and saying that we would take up our abode at the Hotel, at same time telling her of our line of route and if she wished to write to me, where to direct her letter; that it must be addressed to Lady Francis Laud, and to the care of General Fortesque.

On our arrival at the place indicated we found a letter awaiting us from Mrs. Young written by Miss Margaret, containing a pressing invitation to make her house our home during our stay in Peterstown, assuring me of the great interest she took in all my concerns, and how thankful she felt when at last she saw my long expected hand-writing.

Our welcome was equally flattering and equally sincere, my aunt Isabella and Frank (whom Mrs Young chose to denominate my first love) coming to the gate to meet us. I, who on my departure had no one to say "good bye" or "God speed" was on my return welcomed by kisses from my aunt and Isabella, kind words from all.

Our welcome over we went to see John MacBeth and Katie.

The old man was seated by the fire in his great arm-chair, the watch and seals given him by my grandfather hanging above the mantel shelf by his side; I went up to him and ere he was aware of my presence kissed his forehead; I shall never forget the look of pleased surprise with which I was greeted. Katie's delight was unbounded in seeing me what she called "a great lady."

A great lady indeed : with a great sting in her heart wearing out both flesh and spirit.

There were three rosy boys in the cottage besides my name-daughter whom they called the Lady, and strong hearty boys they were, throwing my poor puny Philip quite in the shade.

The old man exhibited the marks he had made on the arms of his two eldest grandsons to distinguish the one from the other ; and very proud he was of both, and laughed heartily at the mistakes we constantly made in addressing the children each by the other's name.

The two houses that seemed falling to pieces the last time I was at the links, had been repaired, the old man said when Willie married they would soon be filled ; and Katie told us as a great secret that in harvest Willie was to marry a cousin of her's, such a nice girl and the best at making nets in the country side, and so pretty, much prettier then she had ever been ; and as she pronounced this encomium on her cousin's beauty she threw down her eyes with a look of proud humility. Katie was very pretty, prettier in her stoutness as a wife than ever she had been as a girl, and so could well afford to praise the beauty of another.

I took a great liking to these cottages, and fancied I would regain my health and strength sooner were I to live by the sea shore.

In a few days they were fitted up by an upholsterer from Peterstown, the one nearest the sea as a dining-room and kitchen, the other as a parlour and bed-rooms.

We passed a pleasant summer there, gathering primroses and sea pinks on the braes, and wandering on the sandy links, or picking dulse and shells from the low rocks which skirted the shore, and watching the great waves as they came rush-

ing almost to our feet ; in July we were all nearly as strong as Katie and her boys.

My old kind friend Miss Betsey spent one or two days every week with us during our sojourn at the Links, and gave me all the news of how things had gone on in the three years and a-half I had been away.

I remarked that Miss Margaret had lost her good looks and seemed to have become even more sharp and censorious than she used to be, asking why the marriage with Mr. Morrison had not taken place.

“ Oh,” said Miss Betsey with a sigh, “ don't speak about it ; I was to blame for all that business ; you see it was me that was the means of bringing him to the house ; as Mrs. Young very truly said, if I had not been a Methodist they would never have known him. What do you think ? Mr. Morrison was a married man all the time ; its a pity he didn't tell at first, 'dced all family men coming to a new charge should speak about their wives if they don't bring them with them ; its only fair, for some of the young ladies in the congregation are sure to fall in love with the minister if they think he's not married ; though I believe Mr. Morrison is such a modest man and so taken up about his work that such a thing never entered his head ; and we never knew he was married till matters had gone nearly as far with him as they did with Mr. Barclay ; only it was quite different with the two men. We can't blame Mr. Morrison for any thing but concealing his marriage, his wife is a poor sickly creature, and your aunt always says between her and me (when we are talking it over, which we often do,) that she is sure he was in hopes his wife would just die out of the way ; and then he could have married Margaret when the mourning year was out and no word about it. But Mr. Barclay was a real rogue, keeping

on with two girls at once, as I dreaded he was doing all the time, altho' poor Margaret thought so much of him that she would not let me dare to hint at it; and you was a witness to his bringing the ring and trying it on her finger quite bold.

"Oh, the base man," continued she with a gesture of impatience, "I never could bear to look at him on the street after it, and him a preacher of the Gospel; but 'deed I need'nt say that, there's none worse than the black coats, they've always half a dozen strings to their bow; however that's neither here nor there, and its no a part of my story, but the long and the short of it is that Margaret was so sure of him that she let everybody see through it; she used to wait in the church for him after every week-day meeting, and on Sabbath evening until every soul was gone but themselves and the Beadle; she would never let me wait to go home along with them without a frown on her face, so I just left them to themselves; I knew very well that two's company and three's none. So it was all going on very even-like to all appearance, and when he left his lodgings and took up house it was Margaret's two feet that went with him to buy the carpets, the rest of the furniture came with his wife, and fine furniture it is; a piano worth a hundred pounds.

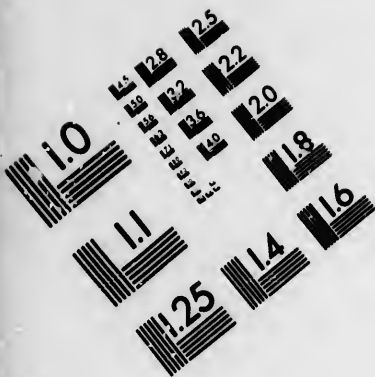
"Well as I was saying, things were going on in this way, every one of us waiting for him to pop the question; all her marriage things that she made for Mr. Barclay were taken out of the drawer where they were getting yellow with lying by, and the girl had two days washing and bleaching at them. Many a time that two days Mrs. Young and me went out to the green to look at them, and beautiful they looked, as white as snow, and when they were

ironed I box-pleated the night-gown frills every one of them with my own hands, they were fit for the Queen. Well, they were finished like to-night, and next morning just as we sat down to breakfast who did we see coming in at the gate and up the walk but the minister ; I winked to Mrs. Young and she winked back again to me, and Margaret's face grew as red as a coal ; John can be very pauky when he likes, and he was just after his morning dram so he was in a good humour, and when he heard Mr. Morrison ask for Margaret he went to the door and right or wrong would have him into breakfast ; I saw Margaret would have liked better to have gone into the drawing-room with him, but she said nothing, she was too well pleased to make bones about anything just then.

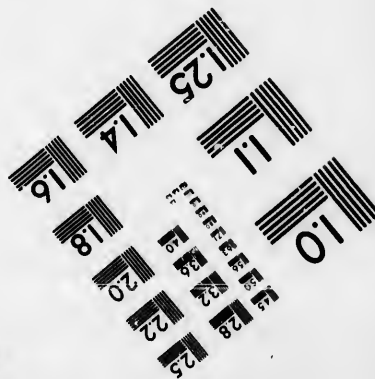
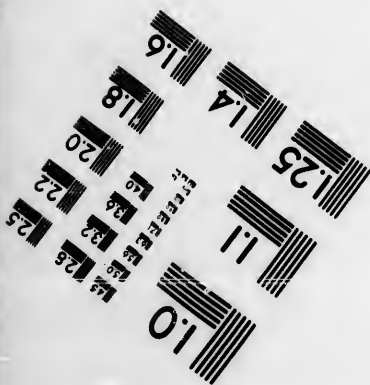
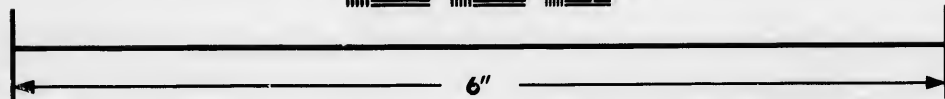
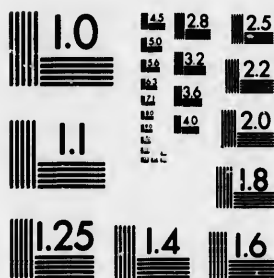
“ Mr. Morrison would not sit down, he said he had called to see Miss Margaret and did not wish to disturb the family ; the reason of his unseasonable visit was a letter he had received from his father-in-law by the morning's mail informing him of the sudden illness of his wife, in consequence of which he would have to ask Miss Young and Mr. Murdock the school tutor to take the charge of the Tuesday and Friday evening meetings, and also if possible to visit the sick on his list, which while he spoke he took from his pocket book.

“ If the house had fallen on our heads we could not have looked more dumfounded ; for myself I would have been very glad to creep into any mouse hole that would hold me. I knew the blame would fall heaviest on me, and no wonder that it should ; I did a most unwarrantable thing in saying he wasn't married, when I had never made an inquiry, in short I knew nothing about it, only that he had no wife here ; and I never thought of a Methodist minister being rich enough to keep up two establishments, altho' I knew he was an independent man. It was well known in the congregation, but your





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aunt and Margaret did not think the Methodists genteel enough company and never visited the rest of the people, and as for me I was so much in the kitchen helping the girl that I never went out but to the chapel, and so I heard nothing about him or any one else.

“Your aunt got up to welcome him, but when she heard what he had to say she sat down again with a very angry face; poor woman, it was no wonder, she made no secret of the marriage from her intimate friends; John began to whistle and swing backwards and forwards on his chair as he always does when he is angry; Margaret said something, I am sure I don't know what; I don't think she knew very well herself what she said, but she took the list from his hand, doubtless trying to look as unconcerned as she could. Mr. Morrison looked surprised like, he saw there was something wrong and took himself off with all convenient speed. I was very thankful when I saw his back turned, I was shaking for fear your aunt would begin upon him; if she had she would have made his ears ring; and after all he was not to blame, there was nobody to blame but my four quarters; it was me that put it into Margaret's head to go to the Chapel. I'm such a busy body; for all the warnings I have got, I will meddle and mell in other people's affairs, and when I saw Margaret so down-hearted about Mr. Barclay's joukry paukry, the thought just struck me what a good wife she would make to our young minister; I wish my tongue had been blistered that day. We have all our besetting sin, and surely mine is interfering in my neighbour's affairs; its been a good lesson to me, I've never been so ready with my advice since.”

“But, Aunt Betsey,” said I, “would it not have been a most unsuitable match? Miss Margaret is much older than Mr. Morrison.”

"Well she is a year or two, but that's nothing; if he had not been a married man, he could not have got a better wife."

"There must be more than a year or two; Miss Margaret must be thirty-five, and Mr. Morrison looks ten years younger, but what did my aunt say when he left?"

"'Deed I can't tell that, for I sneaked off to my own room like a drouket hen in a rainy day; I was scarcely seated after making my bed when the man came from Sarah's with the horse and gig to bring me to Swantown; as good luck would have it the three youngest children had taken the scarlet fever and of course I was wanted to nurse them; its an ill wind that blows no good, and it was a merciful providence that sent the fever to the children at that time, particularly as they got well over it. Isabella or Frank never had it, so Mrs. Young would not let me come back for three months, and I was not sorry, I was ashamed to face them after all that had happened through my means; 'deed Mrs. Young is one in a thousand or she would never suffer to see me again. Its not for the loss of Mr. Morrison, the like of him was no great match for Margaret, but the affront, that was it, and every flippant miss and clacking old wife in Peterstown cracking their jokes and laughing like to burst their sides, at what they called Miss Young's unfortunate mistake. Well its all over now, thank goodness, and altho' she is a little older than she was, she's the handsomest girl in Peterstown, and she'll get a better than him, there's no doubt about that."

I thought there were great doubts of it.

"How did Mr. Morrison's people look on the affair?" I asked; "you Methodists are so strict that I should think they would not like such a fama about their minister."

“Neither they would, if there had been a shadow of blame attached to Mr. Morrison; but everybody gentle and simple in the chapel, but myself and your aunt, laughed at the idea of his marrying Margaret, and some of them had even the impudence to say that she was making love to him and that he was totally unconscious of it; which last I do believe, for it turned out that Mrs. Scott and Mr. Murdock, and several others knew his wife; howsoever our congregation has prospered ever since he came among us, and we have a thriving Sabbath School and full prayer meetings. I don't know how it is but wherever you see a Methodist Chapel begun, tho' its only in an upper room, the blessing of the Lord seems to follow it, and the meeting which at first is only composed of a few poor men and old women like myself, very soon gets to be a congregation of hundreds.”

“It is very easy accounting for this, Aunt Betsey,” replied I, “there is no body of Christians who give more cheerfully unto the Lord than you do; and in good works where the left hand knoweth not what the right hand doeth, you are surpassed by none; I myself have cause to bless God that I have been in my times of direst distress among Methodists.” And while I spoke my mind went back to all the kindness I had received from Mrs. Wilson, and John MacBeth, both staunch adherents of the Methodist connection.

My aunt's circumstances were evidently very different from what they had been when I left Peterstown; she had now two servants and everything in abundance, as it was before the failure of Dundas & Rogers.

I asked Miss Betsey the meaning of this, but she did not wish to speak on the subject, merely saying that George had a good situation and was a good son.

Mrs. Young was equally taciturn; however ere we left

Peterstown, Captain Young, the person least likely to be communicative, had unfolded all.

The day previous to our departure we dined with my aunt's family; we were met at the door by Captain Young who brought us into the drawing-room, and there Fido, Isabella's poodle, was gamboling about in high glee doing his best to destroy a copy of the Times which was yet unperused. Luckless Fido! if he had known Diamond he would have envied him the possession of such a patient master.

What a kicking Captain Young bestowed upon him, at same time swearing such oaths as he never allowed himself to utter except when he had been indulging too freely in his favourite morning dram; I knew this well by experience, and was too wise to interfere in Fido's behalf.

During dinner Captain Young was particularly facetious, talked a great deal and drank more than his usual quantity of wine; my aunt seemed most uneasy, more annoyed than she used to be under such an infliction in the old time, and left the table as soon as possible.

The dining-room door had scarcely closed after our departure ere Captain Young became very communicative and confidential to my grandfather, telling him that George was now the head of the firm, formerly known as "Dundas & Rogers"; it was now "Young & Shields," Shields having been the manager for the late firm; adding that George now allowed his mother four hundred pounds a year, and as the poor tipsy father expressed it, lots besides.

On being asked how a penniless lad like George had been able to possess himself of such a business, the poor maudlin father winked, said there was a secret there; George knew on which side his bread was buttered, could take care of number one, &c., &c.

On our way back to the Links, my grandfather repeated to me what he had been told, adding, that on his return to Edinburgh he would consult his lawyer on the subject as he felt certain the failure was a mere pretence.

We left Peterstown next day and on our arrival in Edinburgh, my grandfather was advised to send a person to Cuba in order properly to investigate into the failure, which had resulted in two penniless men becoming the head of a wealthy firm; ultimately General Fortesque decided to go himself. Although nearly eighty years of age, my grandfather had the appearance and strength of one not sixty, he was accustomed to travelling and enjoyed it, and he felt that he would examine into the affair better himself than any third party whatever.

Lady Laud approved heartily of this plan, indeed entered into it with an interest which surprised me (as she was aware of the terms of my father's will by which my husband could exercise no power whatever over any of the funds coming to me through this source); and proposed that during the General's absence I should spend half the time with her at Harford Yettes, after which she would become my guest in Edinburgh until his return.

I gladly accepted of her invitation, I was anxious to see the future home of my boy; and Sir Francis was too far off for me to entertain any fear of meeting him there; even if he had been in Britain I knew from his mother that Harford Yettes was the last place he was likely to visit; there was no excitement in the isolated old house, without which he could not live.

In less than a week after our return to Edinburgh my grandfather was on his way to Cuba, Lady Laud, Philip and I, inside the old family coach driven by Joseph on our way to Harford Yettes.

Our journey was monotonous and tiresome enough, most of the way lay through barren moors and ill-made roads, with little to be seen or heard except the plover wheeling over our heads, and the cry of the heron. When we halted for the night it was in lonely wayside inns where we were evidently the only strangers ; it certainly was not a pleasant mode of travelling, but it was the way Lady Laud preferred, and had always adopted in her many journeys too and from Harford Yettes during all the time she had been mistress there. My mother-in-law's partiality for Philip increased every day ; when she saw him first after our return from Peterstown, the same pleased expression passed over her face as I had remarked when she looked on him for the first time in Mrs. Wilson's little parlour, but it was almost instantly succeeded by one of acute pain, as the child threw back his hair from his face smiling as he did so ; " My God ! " she exclaimed, " how like," as with compressed lips and eyes fixed on vacancy she sat for some time wholly unconscious of what was passing around her. On one occasion in our journey when we halted to have dinner, Philip strode out and in through the passage of the little inn looking fully as important as the landlord, that most important of all personages in a wayside inn. The child was the picture of beauty and health, Lady Laud stood looking on him with an earnest sadness in her face and mien, and as Joseph entered pointed with her staff to where Philip walked up and down with sturdy step, saying :

" Joseph, look at that."

" Aye ;" replied the old man looking after the child with an expression betokening more pain than pleasure, " he's just the Baron, I saw the one in the other's face long ago."

Philip returned his grandmother's love with interest, would

climb on her knee, kiss her unbidden, bring her his best toys and insist on sharing with her the fruit she herself gave him ; while on her part she would allow him to make a horse of her staff, no mean favour. This staff was an heirloom in the family, having descended, together with her jewels, from an ancestress who was a countess in her own right. Lady Laud's pride of ancestry was her besetting sin, consequently the staff was in her eyes almost sacred ; it must have been this feeling which made her use it, she had certainly no need of support, she walked with the firm step of forty, although she must have numbered sixty years.

We arrived at Harford Yettes on a bright afternoon ; a large iron gate led to the house ; an old grey irregularly built family mansion with a gaunt windy look about it which made me feel uncomfortable and fancy it must be cold and comfortless within, and yet withal, it had an air of grandeur arising from its huge size, its groined and arched windows and doorway. At one side and to the back was a square tower with only one window, which was placed almost at the top ; the tower arrested my attention while we drove up to the house, it was altogether a grim looking old place, and the square windowless tower always filled me with a kind of dread, as I looked up at its one window placed like a great eye in a featureless face.

There were a few trees round the house, but even these seemed to have partaken of the neglect which here as at Rayton pervaded both house and grounds, great dead limbs scathed by lightning pointed their skeleton arms to the grey sky, and more than one dead trunk whose only sign of vitality were the green shoots springing from the roots ; all, house, grounds, trees, everything, had a look of desolation and neglect.

"Your husband's extravagance," said Lady Laud (answering the dismayed look which I must have worn as I scanned the dismal looking scene before me,) "has spread neglect where care and attention were wont to reign; my very servants are reduced to five, and these, with the exception of Joseph, are such as could win their bread nowhere else, and cling to the old house more as a place of shelter than a place of work."

As the carriage approached the house, a strange looking girl, or rather woman dressed like a girl, emerged from a side-door; a quantity of dusty looking hair cut short to her neck, where it stood out in a circle, gave her a most grotesque appearance when viewed in conjunction with her strongly built large body, as with folded arms she stood gazing on us with a look of bewildered surprise which I fancied was largely mixed with fear and aversion as her eye fell on Lady Laud.

In a few seconds she was joined by another, (whether boy or girl it would have been hard to say,) even more extraordinary looking than herself; apparently about fifteen or sixteen years old, dressed in a sort of loose coat or rather frock made of coarse woollen cloth reaching to his ankles and fastened round his waist by a band of the same stuff, sleeves so short that his arms were bare nearly to the elbow, no cap on his head but a profusion of soft brown curls; he had a silly restless look, kept constantly moving between the great door and the one from whence the woman and he had come out and where she still stood. As we neared the house he evinced his delight by clapping his hands and calling out with smiling face: "Joseph, old boy, Joseph;" although he did not even after the carriage stopped make the least attempt to come near us.

Joseph was no less delighted to see him; no sooner were

the horses drawn up, than the old man descended with an alacrity quite unlike his usually staid step, first clasping the boy to his breast, and then holding him at arm's length, stroking his hair and gazing on him with delight, saying as he did so, "Godfrey, my bonny boy, Godfrey, my bonny boy," seeming for the time quite oblivious to the presence of any one else.

Certainly Godfrey was a bonny boy, although too evidently a silly one; it was evident he was a Laud, the same beauty of eye they all possessed, the finely cut features, and strange to say, silly as he was, a finely formed head, where the broad temples were the most conspicuous feature, very different from the low forehead of Lady Laud.

While this scene was passing I looked at her ladyship that I might see how she took this strange dereliction from duty in one whose attention to herself generally partook more of the character of devotion than of servitude; I was equally shocked and surprised by the feelings depicted in her face; astonishment, anger, hate, each had there a representative; her scowling brow, glaring eye, in which strange to say latent fear was largely developed, and widely distended nostril, her face sharp and white, as if her heart stood still, some terrible truth flashing on her mind for the first time with a scorching light like "Mene Tekel," in the Halls of Babylon, or Dante's legend over the gate of Hell. She saw my eye fixed upon her in wonder, and recovering herself, with a command of countenance few possess in an equal ratio, called for Joseph to unfasten the coach door, which he had neglected in his delight at seeing the boy; this done she descended, and addressing the latter, said in a tone of inquiry:

"They've been kind to you, Godfrey?"

"Yes, my lady," was the reply, but no smile lighted up the silly face in answering her as had been the case when he welcomed Joseph; and following the old man to the carriage from which he was lifting Philip, Godfrey exclaimed in tones of joy, clapping his hands as before:

"A little Baron, a little Baron."

"Aye," said Joseph putting the child in the boy's arms, "this is the Baron o' Brackely now, but may be ye'll be the Baron yet yourself, Godfrey."

The old man's words had reached Lady Laud's ears and evidently given great offence, as retracing her steps she ordered Joseph to carry the child into the house himself, asking with a look of constrained passion:

"How dared you put Master Laud into the arms of an epileptic fool like that, whose next motion might be to dash him to the ground."

"No fear o' that," was the reply; then adding in a lower tone accompanied by one of his dogged looks:

"If there was no one at Harford Yettes but him and me, maybe he would get his wits again; I mind the day he was as wise and warldlike as that bairn."

Lady Laud looked at him with a fierce air which seemed to bring him to his senses, and taking Philip in his arms he followed her ladyship to the house.

While this was passing the woman who was the first to greet our arrival, stood with folded arms looking with great curiosity at the child and myself, yet never offering to help in carrying wraps or parcels, of which there were many and various stowed away in the capacious old coach.

I followed Lady Laud into the house, where in a large entrance hall we were met and welcomed with words and demeanour of the greatest respect, by a little stout old woman.

in the black gown and white cap of a widow, whose dress, so scrupulously neat and clean, her long white apron without a single stain or wrinkle, formed as pleasing a contrast to the garb of the woman outside as did her manners and appearance.

"You are welcome to Harford Yettes again, my Lady," said she curtsying with old fashioned formality to Lady Laud as she spoke. "I would have been ready as is my duty to welcome your ladyship before your entrance, but that the coach came so quietly up the grassy walk, and I being in your ladyship's chamber knew not of your approach until I heard your ladyship's well known step on the threshold."

"I find you now, good Mrs. Morrison," replied the Lady with a graciously condescending air, "as I have always done, at your post; you are the same faithful servant of our house in the present evil time that you were in its greatness ere the shadow fell;" then turning towards me she said in a tone of as much respect as she would have used in introducing a Duchess, "this is Lady Francis Laud; and you will have no difficulty in recognizing here," (laying her hand on Philip's head) "the heir of Harford Yettes."

The old woman curtsied low as my name was pronounced, and then turning to the child took him from Joseph's arms saying:

"He is a true Laud indeed, my Lady."

"The rooms I ordered as a bed chamber for Lady Francis and a nursery for Master Laud have been prepared," inquired her Ladyship.

"They have, my Lady; although the Tower room from having been so long shut up required much doing to."

"You have also, I hope, as usual, good Morrison, attended regularly to administering Godfrey's medicine yourself;" this was said with a peculiarly earnest and searching look.

"In that," replied the housekeeper, "I have for the first time in twenty-five years ventured to disobey your Ladyship; and when you see Master Godfrey I feel sure you will approve of what I have done."

Lady Laud's face became livid with passion as she replied in a low, constrained voice, as if forcing herself to be calm: "It is impossible I should do so, as I could never allow my feeble judgment in a matter of so much consequence and wherein I as a woman must confess my entire ignorance, to supersede that of the first physicians in the land."

The poor woman blushed scarlet as she replied in a meek voice: "Your ladyship is aware that an accident prevented the first supply of medicine sent in March from ever reaching me; and although I did not apprise you of the fact the second packet did not find its way to Harford Yettes until late in May; by that time the improvement in Master Godfrey was so great as to astonish all who saw him; and in June when Joseph came he surprised me teaching the poor boy to read. Joseph as well as myself thought it wisest to let well alone; I gave him no more medicine and now he walks as steadily and as upright as Sir Francis, and every day becomes more sensible in mind, and stronger in body, instead of as formerly, growing every year weaker and more imbecile."

"You can argue well, good Morrison," replied Lady Laud, the trembling of her frame betraying the passion which she would fain have concealed, "the event will tell whether Sir James Smith or my servants have the best medical knowledge; should a Laud become the inmate of a madhouse, owing to your presumption in setting up your judgment against the highest medical authority in the land, that you did it for the best will form a small excuse in my eyes for the crime you have committed."

The poor housekeeper became pale and red by turns as fear of the consequences her neglect might involve, or indignation at being addressed in such terms prevailed.

Lady Laud explained to me that the subject of their conversation was the poor boy whom I had seen by the carriage door on our arrival, that he was a nephew of her late husband who had been epileptic from his birth, that it was only by the careful and constant administration of a powerful medicine, was prevented from becoming a raving maniac. They forewarned she said by every physician who had been consulted on the case, that this state of mind would be the certain result of a cessation of the medicine, that some years since the supply of medicine failed, or they had inadvertently substituted another, and the result was his having fits almost constantly during a period of two days.

The housekeeper listened with a grieved and humbled air, expressing her contrition for the offence and her hopes that the result would not now be as Lady Laud's fears anticipated.

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CHAPTER VII.

"What would the world be to us,
If the children were no more?
We should dread the desert behind us
Worse than the dark before."

LADY LAUD led the way by a side door at the further end of the Hall into a large room fitted up as a breakfast parlour, thence to her own bed-room, which again communicated with three smaller apartments, each of which contained a little white curtained bed.

"These rooms are full of pleasant memories," said she with a deep drawn sigh; "it was here the happiest time of my life, my childhood and girlhood was spent; in the Christmas and summer holidays, that always seemed so short and so far apart; here also, during fourteen years, the young life of my own boys passed like a long spring day so full of promise; but the blight came, and fell alike on old and young."

She spoke of her children in a hoarse voice, her last words scarcely audible; stopping suddenly, she, in her usual cold clear tones, desired the housekeeper, who had followed us, to show me to my room, and then send to her the girl who had been provided as an attendant on Philip, adding, as she turned towards me: "I am going to be Philip's mama for the few weeks you are here; it will seem to me as if the old time had come back again."

The arrangement was not just what I liked; I did not at all fancy having Philip away from myself, and going towards one of the ante-chambers, I asked: "May not I have one of these nice, white little rooms, and so be near you also?"

"Those beds were last slept in by my children," replied

her ladyship, "it is one of the few indulgences I give myself to keep them sacred ; it is eight years since the last of these you are looking at was occupied. In this," said she, pointing to the other chamber, " Francis always sleeps during the short visit he pays to Harford Yettes. The room I have appropriated to you is one from the windows of which you can see all the country round ; the first rays of the rising sun lighten up its walls ; it was the play-room of my children, and the gayest place in this old house. Sometimes when I sit here alone in my chamber I fancy I hear their merry voices singing in the top of the old tower, but alas ! alas ! they are hushed forever, and he whose voice was loudest in play and first in welcome, is dumb—dead—and I——"

She stopped suddenly as before when she spoke of her children, clasped her hands tightly together, her eyes wandering restlessly from side to side as if something more bitter than grief troubled her.

The room to which I was led by the old matron was placed at the very top of the old tower and reached by a half spiral staircase rising from the end of a long passage at the back of the house. I would not have chosen the isolated situation of my room if I had been consulted on the subject, but as Lady Laud had decided on it for me I was obliged to submit with a good grace.

The room was large, and together with the landing on the top of the staircase, occupied the entire width and length of the tower, the view from which on both sides was, as Lady Laud had said, of great extent, but as it consisted of barren moorland skirted by wild bare hills, it did not tend to enliven the gloomy looking room.

Having made a survey of my apartment, I threw open one of the windows, and leaning out found that on the side of the

house seen from the tower, there were some fine trees and ornamental shrubs on which somewhat more care had been bestowed than fell to the lot of those in front.

While I stood looking down from my window, and wondering for what purpose the tower with its one room, could have been made, I heard a window open in the body of the house, and Lady Laud's voice calling Godfrey once or twice, the boy, who I had not seen before, from his being hid by a holly hedge, under which he was resting in the sunshine, got up and leisurely walked towards the window.

"There's a fig for you, Godfrey," said her ladyship, and as she said so let one fall into his hands, which he put together and held out on purpose to catch it, "eat that," continued she, "and if you like it you shall have a paperful."

The boy greedily swallowed the fig, and having expressed himself pleased therewith, the promised paperful was thrown to him; this little incident told me very forcibly that within the last half hour I had judged unjustly of Lady Laud.

We had an early dinner in a large dining-room, the walls of which were adorned by the portraits of the old Barons of Harford Yettes and their ladies.

After dinner Lady Laud went, as she said was her wont, to repose for an hour, and I, accompanied by Philip, sought the open air in front of the house. I thought of poor Godfrey and wandered in search of the holly hedge, where I had seen him sit down to eat his figs, and there I found him, poor boy, foaming at the mouth, and tossing his arms in a wild convulsive fit. I remembered Lady Laud's stern rebuke to Joseph, and thanked God it had not occurred while my child was in his arms; I could now understand and appreciate the fierce look she gave the old man as she ordered him to bring Philip into the house.

I endeavoured unsuccessfully to wipe the foam from his lips, he could not remain still for a second, at one time rolling himself like a ball, at another tearing the earth as if in agony. I hastened to bring Mrs. Morrison, who soon came accompanied by Joseph, and had the poor fellow removed into the house. I felt for the good housekeeper as much as for the boy, her face was the picture of dismay.

I did not see Godfrey for several days, but Lady Laud told me that as she had anticipated, the fits were more violent and of longer continuance than even they had previously been. And when at last he was able to come out, the poor creature was half bent, constantly crawling about on his knees, his tongue hanging from his mouth and unable to utter a word, save "Geddey," which he went about repeating in a doleful tone, looking about wistfully as if he had lost something.

In the evening my mother-in-law brought me into a room she called her work-room. This apartment had an entrance from one of the passages, and also a door leading into her own parlour. Her ladyship was fond of work, and prided herself upon her skill in embroidery, well she might, the inner drawing-room, one I had not then seen, was hung with tapestry, the work of Lady Rawdon and herself.

While at Harford Yettes her time was almost entirely devoted to this employment, which seemed to have a perfect fascination for her; on entering the room I was surprised to see the uncouth looking girl who had stood with folded arms gazing at us on our arrival, busily occupied with an immense frame filling in the ground work of a group representing Judith in the act of killing Hollefernes.

"I employ dumb Hanna in the evenings here," said Lady Laud. "I took the trouble to teach her myself, so that should the next lady of Harford Yettes cast her off, which is most

likely, she will be able to gain a livelihood by her needle, it is very doubtful if another family could be found who would take Hanna as an inmate, her appearance is so revolting, and her habits so lazy as to make her quite a burden on her employers."

While Lady Laud spoke Hanna slackened her speed to something like two stitches a minute, gazing between each with open mouth, as if she would fain make her eyes serve the part nature had denied to her ears, her mistress observing this, went towards her and administered a pretty sharp tap from her long staff on Hanna's ill-cared for head, or rather hair, the latter was so thick and woolly that I much doubt, if the blow (although given with a will) reached the head.

Poor Hanna! revolting looking as her mistress had said, most truly she was, and yet I felt an interest in, and pitied her far more than I did Godfrey; every one treated him kindly, Mrs. Morrison and Joseph made a pet of him; but poor Hanna was the ill-used butt and drudge of all, even Mrs. Morrison ever gentle and kind to others, could see no one good quality in Hanna; work, work, for Hanna, nothing but work; making beds, sweeping and dusting before dinner from early morning; in the afternoon, washing dishes, arranging cupboards, &c., under the housekeeper's directions, and in the evening while all others rested, she was kept bending over an embroidery frame under the vigilant eye of Lady Laud, and all this toil without fee or reward further than the coarse clothing of which she had only one suit; she had no bonnet, no shawl. Lady Laud said she could not hear, therefore, it was useless for her to go to church, ~~but~~ she had no need of either bonnet or shawl.

I soon found that her food was given her on the same

economical principles. Mrs. Morrison of course had her meals served in her own room, Joseph and Sarah, Philip's maid, eat together in the servants' hall, while the two farm servants and Hanna, fed in the kitchen on the coarsest fare.

Joseph went three times a week to the nearest village for our letters. On these occasions I got him to bring me a basket of fruit or other indulgence of the like kind for Philip, which I made the latter share with Godfrey, always reserving a small portion for Hanna. The first time I gave her an apple, which I chose large and red, she looked in my face, holding it in her hand as if waiting to know what she was to do with it. I cut it up and putting a piece to her lips made her understand she was to eat it, upon which she gave me a look so full of astonishment and pleasure, it was worth a golden apple to have received such. I saw then that her face was capable of another expression than that of the gloomy look of discontent which it usually wore.

The hours devoted to her work in Lady Laud's room would have been to me and I fancy were to Hanna the most irksome of the day; in those summer evenings the other servants reposed in the house, or wandered about the belting, their labour over; not so with her, she must work until the time to retire for the night came, if she made an excuse for a few minutes absence by signing to her mistress that she wished for a drink, and delayed her return beyond two or three minutes she was sent for, and greeted on taking her seat again by more than one tap on the head from Lady Laud's staff.

Shortly after my arrival at Harford Yettes we had a visit from Lady Rawdon, who remained two days; several of the neighbouring gentry also made forenoon calls, but with the exception of Lady Rawdon, I did not see any of our visitors. Whether Lady Laud knew the time they were likely to come,

and sent Philip and I for a drive on purpose to avoid them, I know not, but the day we remained at home no one came, the day she proposed a long drive for us, visitors were sure to arrive and depart in our absence.

Lady Laud was frequently absent for a day, going as she said on business to the neighbouring town, and on one occasion remained from home for a fortnight; in her absence Philip became so ill that I was obliged to sit up with him during the night, in which duty I was assisted by good Mrs. Morrison who was equally fitted for a sick nurse as for a housekeeper.

Sitting there in the night beside the child's bed, she delighted in telling her reminiscences of the young days of Lady Laud, her sister Lady Rawdon, and the two brothers who were the last Knights of Harford Yettes previous to Sir Francis; the latter was no favourite, I scarcely recollect hearing her talk of him.

One twilight evening she and I sat by the fire, the light from which was struggling to outvie the fast declining light of day, I listening to and she talking of the scenes she was so fond of recalling to mind; when the door was opened gently and poor Godfrey's face peeped in with an enquiring look which seemed to say, "May I enter?"

"Come in, Godfrey," said I.

Putting on the foolish pleased smile which always lighted up his face when spoken to kindly, he came softly up to where Mrs. Morrison sat, and placing a stool sat down by her side. Having seated himself he drew from under his frock a primer such as children of five or six years old learn from, and placing it on her knee began to spell over the words; to my surprise he knew the alphabet, could join letters together, and seemed anxious to learn.

Mrs. Morrison's attention was at once wholly occupied by

Godfrey, she spelt the lines over and over, trying to make him comprehend the meaning of each word, and looking as if she had reaped a rich harvest of reward for her toil when she fancied she had succeeded.

When the lesson was sufficiently conned over to tire Godfrey, she kissed him, calling him her dear good boy, and taking his hand as if he had been a child, retired to put him to bed, a task she said she had performed every night for the last fourteen years.

On the housekeeper's return she brought with her two portraits painted on ivory, set in gold, putting them into my hand, said, "these are the portraits of Godfrey's father and mother, and of himself as he was before this terrible trouble took away his strength and his senses."

The smaller of the two was that of a beautiful girl, with soft brown eyes and hair, poor Godfrey had inherited his mother's hair and her dimpled cheek, in the rest of his face he was a true Laud. The other picture was a portrait half length of the same girl, on her knee a boy about two years of age in whose lineaments it was easy even yet to trace a likeness to Godfrey, while a little to one side and behind, was the portrait of a man, in whose face were portrayed the features of Lady Laud and her son, but there was a nobler and truer spirit in the depths of the eye and brow than she or Sir Francis could boast of. The girl's dress was a pale blue, the boy's a short white embroidered robe; the picture seems to lie before me now while I write, I have never seen a fairer face than the mother's, or one that beamed with more intelligent beauty than the child's, alas! alas! from the latter, "how the glory had departed."

"You must tell me the story of this lady and her husband," said I, as I still held possession of both pictures.

"If I do," replied the old housekeeper, "I must begin and end with the life and death of the last rightful lord of Harford Yettes; those who came after him, have held lands and title by a slippery tenure; were Godfrey to get back the sense he was born with, and which he held fast for the first four years of his life, the title would fall from the head of the present Knight, and the lands slip from under his feet."

I looked at the old woman with a startled and uneasy feeling at my heart as she said these words; the present Knight was naught to me; the only feeling I cherished towards him was a desire strong as death that we might never meet, never look into each other's face again; but his right, affected his child's rights, and his child was mine, my light of life; and the question forced itself upon me, would it make my happiness or his, that he should usurp the rights of another? I did not answer myself then, but summoning to my aid all the self-possession I could command, I requested the housekeeper to tell her story.

"I first became an inmate of Harford Yettes as the attendant of Lady Laud, the wife of Sir Hugh and the mother of the young man whose portrait you have in your hand; their family consisted of two sons, the eldest of whom was only a month old when I entered my service at the Hall. Roderick the heir was only two years his brother's senior, but those two years made Roderick rich and great, while Robert was nobody.

"At Saltoun where Lady Rawdon now resides, Sir Hugh's brother, who was a widower, then lived with his two daughters, Constance, who is now Lady Laud, and Maud, Lady Rawdon; these children were twins, and were only three months' younger than my mistress' first boy; their mother died soon after they completed their third year, and from that

time Lady Laud had the sole management of the young ladies.

“ When they grew old enough to be sent to school it was Lady Laud who placed them first in a school in England, and afterwards in France—the vacations were always spent here ; their father coming at Christmas and summer holidays to meet them—nothing was too good for them, and no trouble was spared to make their visits to Harford Yettes the most pleasant part of their time ; they grew tall and handsome, Lady Laud was never tired driving about with them. Roderick, whose portrait you have in your hand, the eldest son, and the heir, riding on horse-back by the side of the coach shewing them to all the neighbouring gentry. Lady Laud was as proud of them as if they had been princesses, and well she might, there were no ladies in all the country side like them, so accomplished, and so beautiful ; they were heiresses besides, their mother was the heiress of Saltoun, and they in her right the co-heiresses.

“ Of the two, Constance was the grandest and most beautiful, and whether at hunt or ball, she was the chosen queen, every one in the house from drawing-room to hall and from hall to kitchen laid her down for Sir Roderick’s wife, and the future lady of Harford Yettes.

“ Roderick became the Baron in his eighteenth year ; there was a grand funeral for Sir Hugh, all the gentry from far and near dined at the hall, and all the time Sir Hugh’s body lay in state, the kitchen fire was never out night nor day cooking for that dinner ; the family hearse got five new plumes, and fifty carriages came with their owners to follow his remains to the church, and afterwards back here to the mausoleum in the grounds where the lords have been laid for six hundred years back.

"He was well mourned that day by lord and loon as far as black and crape and solemn look can go, and then we heard no more of Sir Hugh; no one missed him, the Lady ordered everything, and commanded every one, as she always had done, and all went right under her directions, and we all looked forward to the time when Sir Roderick would be twenty-one, and would marry his beautiful cousin.

"I do not know how Sir Roderick felt then, I never saw him pay more attention to the one sister than to the other, and I used to be much with them. The young ladies, by Lady Laud's example, treated me more as a humble companion than as a domestic; but I saw, as we all did, that his mother had set her mind on the match, and we knew that she never set her mind on anything that did not come to pass.

"Whether Constance ever really loved Sir Roderick is not easy to say, but when Lady Laud used to say as she often did in speaking of things she wished to be done in years after she herself must in the course of nature be silent in the dust, 'I hope, Constance, you will see this done,' or 'I depend on you Constance for seeing my plans carried out,' the young lady would blush, and with one of her sweetest smiles, bow her head in token of her obedience to her future mother's commands.

"By and bye Sir Edward Rawdon came to reside at the Holms, a place he had bought, and it was soon obvious to all that he was too often at Harford Yettes for visits of mere ceremony, or even friendship; he was ever at Constance's side; but Lady Laud, who never shut her eyes to anything that was going on, sent Constance on a visit of three months to her mother's friends, keeping Maud at home, as she said it would be too lonely for herself to be without one of them.

"At this time the two young gentlemen were at Cambridge,

and Sir Roderick was requested by his mother to spend his Sundays and holidays with Constance, whose uncle's family lived within an easy distance of his college, so this was all arranged, and put in execution to the old lady's entire satisfaction.

"The next time Sir Edward Rawdon came to Harford Yettes my lady had a long conversation with him alone in the drawing room. I was in the inner drawing-room fitting up part of the tapestry which the two young ladies and myself had just finished; I used then to fill the place which Hanna does so ill and inefficiently now. I heard all that passed, she talked of Miss Maud as if she had been an angel, said the man who gained her heart, would gain a treasure, and many such like expressions, and ending by saying that as soon as Roderick had completed his majority Constance and he would be married.

"Sir Edward took his departure that forenoon without seeing any one but the old lady, but very soon he came again, and we had balls and dinners such as were never before seen at Harford Yettes.

"Now that Constance was away, Maud was the belle of every fete, and when they rode a mimic ring, Sir Edward Rawdon was king, and she queen; the short and the long of it is, that before Constance's return Maud had become Lady Rawdon.

"That was the grandest and gayest bridal, and she the happiest bride that in sixty years I saw at Harford Yettes, little did the old lady think what was to be the end of all her plans, when so much trouble and expense was put out on that marriage! Often during the time these great preparations lasted did she say to me: 'This marriage is a grand affair, but its light will grow pale enough, before that of the one that will happen next.'

"I never saw her so happy before, it was well it came then, she had few happy days afterwards.

"Two weeks after the marriage Constance came home looking more beautiful than ever, Lady Laud congratulating herself on her foresight in not allowing the beauty to come home previous to the marriage, and the young lady was quite pleased with the turn things had taken. Sir Roderick was younger and handsomer than her *ci-devant* lover and moreover his acres were broader and his rents heavier. What perhaps weighed with her as much as any other consideration was her love for her sister; where she loves she goes with all her heart, and she can hate also; besides she had been so long accustomed to hear herself spoken of as the future Lady Laud that a doubt of its being otherwise never crossed her mind.

"The time now came for the brothers to leave Cambridge. Sir Roderick would be of age in two months and his mother wished if possible that his twenty-first birthday and his marriage should be celebrated on the same day; but when he came home and was spoken to on the propriety of choosing a wife, he declared his intention of making the grand tour before settling down to the duties of a landlord.

"Here was a disappointment; all Lady Laud could say was of no avail, she had a strong will, but not like his; and the day after he had received the congratulations of the neighbouring gentry, and his own tenants, he set off on his travels leaving his brother to assist the old lady in his absence.

"It was then that Robert told his mother, what she never forgave him for concealing, that comparatively few of Roderick's Sundays and not one of his holidays were spent with Constance, but at the residence of one of the professors,

where all his leisure hours were devoted to wooing the professor's beautiful daughter.

"The old Lady was outrageous when she heard of the prospect of defeat for the scheme so long, and hitherto so successfully laid; she would have gone after her son and brought him back by either force or guile, but that she knew not his route. On leaving home he said his plans were not formed, but that he would write from each resting place; I believe she would have gone to seek him, little as she knew of his plans, had she not been detained at home by the death of her brother-in-law, Constance's father, who having come to the feast given in honour of his nephew's majority, and eaten too heartily of salmon, had been seized with gout in the stomach and died a few hours after the departure of Sir Roderick.

"'Is it not too hard, Morrison,' said Lady Laud, the day after Mr. Laud of Saltoun's death, 'for me to be kept idle here by that useless old man's burial, when I should be by my son's side preventing what may be done in a day and cannot be undone in a life time.'

"There was little idle ceremony made about that funeral; had it happened at a more convenient season, Lady Laud, who was fond of display, and thought it necessary to keep up the dignity of the house and name, would doubtless have given him as grand a funeral as Sir Hugh's had been; but she had no heart for any thing of the kind then, and old Mr. Laud of Saltoun was carried to his grave with little pomp and no tears, save those shed by his daughter for a cause I fear little connected with his loss.

"A long month passed over ere we had letters from Sir Roderick; he wrote from Paris but was to leave it next morning, and so it was with every letter we received; he did not write till he was about to start for a new place, never saying

where he was going to or where he was to halt next ; he must have suspected his mother's intention of following him. I think Mr. Robert was the main spring of all this ; the brothers were much attached to each other, and I have always thought that Mr. Robert's fancy of going to the post office himself was that he might receive his brother's letters and reply to them unknown to his mother.

"However things did not last long this way. Lady Laud became so restless and uneasy that she could not remain, as she said, idle at Harford Yettes, when by seeing the schoolmaster, as she called the professor, and his daughter, and explaining to them the evil they had done in entrapping the affections of her son away from one to whom he had been virtually engaged from his youth up, she might prevent this misalliance.

"She could talk well, old Lady Laud, when it was her interest to do so ; she would almost persuade you that black was white, and wrong was right, and she was not over scrupulous in the means she employed when she had a purpose to serve ; she was a Laud herself as the present Lady is, a Laud married to a Laud ; for two hundred years back, the knights of Harford Yettes have only married with one of their own blood ; and the gossips of the country people say that in the old time these ladies did not hesitate with their own hands to rid themselves of those who stood in their path.

"This is only village gossip indulged in by ignorant people at their own firesides on wintry evenings, no one would be daring enough to impeach a Laud of such doings in open day ; besides they were always rich until now and open handed to the poor ; that is the virtue which goes the longest way, and tells best, and it makes any other evil easily hushed up.

“ But to return to my mistress’ journey, she went to Cambridge and returned in great spirits ; she had seen the professor and his daughter, ‘ a pretty Lady Laud,’ she said, ‘ she would make truly, not taller than Constance was on her fourteenth birthday.’ She had explained all to them and the result was that the young lady and her father had both voluntarily resolved, never again to see one whom they believed had deceived them as Sir Roderick had done. What she said to them she did not tell and I did not dare to ask.

“ But it did not end there ; a year from the time of his departure, Sir Roderick again sought the villa on the banks of the Cam, returning before half the time had elapsed which he proposed spending on the continent, that he might ascertain in person why for six months his letters were unanswered ; month after month he had attributed the non arrival of his letters to accident, until at last the truth forced itself upon him that no letters had been written.

“ Well, he came in person to learn the reason for her silence and to claim his bride ; poor fellow, he was met on the threshold by a funeral procession ; another had come before him, more powerful than any earthly bridegroom, and she willingly obeyed his call, she was wearied of the life in which she believed she had met such bitter falsehood in return for her love and faith ; her last words were, ‘ If ever he comes back, tell him I knew all, and forgave him, as I hope to be forgiven.’ Poor girl ! if she had known the truth she had nothing to forgive. Sir Roderick waited until the grave had closed over the one he loved best on this earth, until he had been told all the base falsehoods, as he himself called them, by which his mother had broken the heart of her who was dearer to him than life, and then he again sought the continent without coming once near Harford Yettes.

“ During fourteen years the rents of the land were sent to France and Germany to be spent there, and all that time the old Lady never lost hope of his coming home at last to marry Constance, but it was a vain hope. We heard indeed of yearly visits of a few hours made by Sir Roderick to a green grave and a lonely old man at Cambridge; but to Harford Yettes, to the home of his youth, he never turned his face.

“ Constance had many offers and if any of these had been from one equal to Sir Roderick in rank or estate I doubt not but she would have married, with or without her aunt's consent, but all were his inferiors and she could not brook marrying one whose head was not as high as that of her first lover, as the old lady always called him.

“ Miss Constance's beauty never faded; at thirty-five she had the soft cheek, unruffled brow, and bright eye of twenty-two, her mirror told her she could afford to wait, but she need not have waited for him, and if I had dared I would have said so; I nursed Roderick as a child and tended him as a boy; no man of forty years was more firm than he; what he said once he said for aye, was it likely he would be less firm as a man than as a boy? and he must have known it was to bring about a marriage with Constance his mother said the false words which worked him so much woe; besides he knew, and so did I, that Robert would have given his two eyes for her, they were fond brothers and that was enough to have kept him back, had there been nought else; I think she knew it well herself, but breaking Robert's heart would have been no more in her eyes then, than treading upon the thistle down on her way to church.

“ Fourteen years had passed, as I said, since last Sir Roderick saw Harford Yettes; during the last year no letter had been received from him, except those in which he acknowledged

receipt of the rents remitted to him by his brother ; however when the letters came, they came all at once.

“ One morning Joseph returned from the post office, his bag filled with snow white letters and small packets, containing marriage cards and favours, Sir Roderick was married! and cards had come to be distributed not only to his own relatives but to all the gentry round, he was determined that all the country should know there was a new Lady of Harford Yettes.

“ At first the news seemed to strike his mother to the earth. She took to her own room, and for two days no one was allowed to enter but myself, and to me she never opened her lips ; however at the end of the two days she recovered herself, and ere Sir Roderick’s honeymoon was over, Constance was married to Mr. Robert, and the old Lady’s will made leaving her second son’s wife heir to all her money ; this was no small sum, she was an heiress herself, and with all their love of display they were a saving race. Mr. Robert would have had it otherwise ; he was a just man and a generous, but he had no voice in the matter, the mother’s will was law and the money was theirs ; but money could not buy the title or the old name of Harford Yettes, and Constance forgot her winning sunny smile ever since the day those snowy letters came to the old house

“ After the two marriages, family peace seemed to be restored. Sir Roderick sent home the picture of his wife (one of those you now hold in your hand), the old Lady or Mr. Robert could see no beauty in it, but Constance could, although she never said so ; eight years after she was a wife I saw her take that picture from its place, throw it on the floor and put her foot on it, observing my eyes fixed upon her as I entered the room, she knew I was aware of what she had done, and giving the picture a slight kick she said :

“ ‘ I hate her and I ever shall.’

“ However to go back to my story, in due course there were the usual number of wedding feasts at Harford Yettes and all the gentry came to offer their congratulations to the young couple ; but to my eye the bride received their compliments with more impatience than pleasure ; the thoughts of the one who should have been the bridegroom turned every sweet to bitter, and clouded every sky ; but her day of triumph was coming, and she had a longer time of it than she thought possible on her wedding day.

“ When she left her room dressed in her white satin robe, she said, ‘ I wish, Morrison, a thunderbolt would strike me to the earth provided it also consumed the wretch who has bewitched Roderick.’

“ Well, before she was a wife a year and a day she presented her husband with the handsomest boy that ever was born at Harford Yettes ; when he was put into the old lady’s arms she said as if by the spirit of prophecy, ‘ thrice welcome to the Baron of Brackely.’

“ And Baron of Brackely he would have been had he lived ; what am I saying ? He may be alive now for aught we know, no one saw him die or dead. I am a garrulous old woman and ever departing from my story.

“ For eight days after the Baron, as we all called him, was born, the house never emptied ; poor and rich alike were welcome, all coming to wish the old lady joy of her grandson and heir (for although Sir Roderick was first married, there was no word of a son to him) and all the lords and ladies who came to the noble room had wine and brandy flowing as free as the river, and cake and confectionery as plentiful as if they came down with the hail ; and in the servants’ hall the poor folks had bread and beef to their heart’s content.

“ The child had two nurses, one for the day and one for the

night, until he was two years old, and from the day of his birth until the day of the old lady's death he never slept a night out of her anti-chamber.

“ Six months passed away, and the young Baron was yet unchristened, and first one month and then another slipped by, until he was a year old ; no word yet of a son to Sir Roderick, the old lady could scarcely conceal her joy ; she never troubled Heaven much with her prayers but if ever she prayed at all I am sure it was that Lady Roderick might be barren ; whether she did or not, she had her wish, many a time has she said to me as she was seated in the coach with the child and his nurse for their noonday drive, for she always went with them—she scarcely ever permitted him to be out of her sight : ‘ Morrison do you think Roderick would be willing to exchange his whey-faced wife and half his lands for the young Baron ? ’

“ Well, he was christened on his first birth-day ; and if his father and mother's wedding was allowed to pass without much pomp, his christening made up for it ; his cap and robe took a year to make, they were begun when he was only a week old, and were only finished by hard work in time for the occasion ; the cap was the finest pillow lace and the robe a marvel of needle work.

There were a hundred of the first gentry in the land bidden to the ceremony, and the feast ; and the infant had six of the best born young ladies in the country for maids to wait on him, dressed in white lace gowns and pink robes. Every one said the old lady was crazy, but if she was, so was the young lady, for Constance was as much pleased with the parade as her mother-in-law ; the only one who disapproved of the pageant was Mr. Robert, and he loved his wife too dearly to say much against what gave her pleasure.

"Many a consultation was held between the two ladies ere they could decide on a name for the child, but at last the Laud who carried the Banner of Brackely to the Holy Land was chosen for his name-father, and the child was called Charles Geoffrey ; it is his name you see embroidered in letters of gold on the white satin banner in the inner drawing room.

"In eight years Lady Robert, as we were taught to call her, had borne five sons, two of whom died in infancy, the others were healthy and strong, and the young Baron the noblest and best of them all.

"Many were the joyful letters sent to Sir Roderick all this time telling of the birth and well-being of his nephews, and although the two who died only lived a few days, the old lady would not allow intimation of their death to be sent for several months after he was apprised of their birth ; all this must have been very galling to Sir Roderick and his Lady, but they were wise enough to conceal their feelings, and each letter had a due and suitable response.

"The longest lane has a turning ; and with the end of the eight years came the announcement of the birth of a son to Sir Roderick and Lady Laud ; he was born and christened on the same day, as is the fashion in Catholic countries, and the same letter that brought the news of his birth told that his name was Godfrey.

"This letter was read with silence and black looks, and it was none the more welcome, for the child's name, Godfrey, was the name of Sir Roderick's grandfather and also of the first Laud who was both Baron of Brackely and Harford Yettes ; these gentlemen were held in great honour, for their benevolent deeds, by the country folks ; and to have heard the old lady speak you would have thought that Lady Roderick had

defrauded her grandchildren (as she called Constance's children) of their birthright, by naming her son Godfrey.

"We heard from time to time of the welfare and growth of the boy, who although the veritable heir, was spoken of in his father's house, where the others only lived by sufferance, as an intruder; when he was a year old a curl of sunny hair came in a letter to the old lady with the intelligence that the boy could walk, the curl and letter both were thrown in the fire and as usual it fell to the lot of Robert to reply to his brother's letter.

"Well this was but the beginning of trouble, and more sorrow was in store for all, two years had scarce passed from the birth of Godfrey when orders came from Sir Roderick to have the suite of chambers in the western wing fitted up for the use of himself and his family; the old furniture was to remain and whatever was required to make them comfortable was to be added regardless of expense. Lady Roderick was again to become a mother, and it was the wish of her husband that the child should be born at Harford Yettes.

"To my surprise the old lady was very much pleased with this arrangement and the suite of rooms prepared forthwith.

"There was no meeting of the tenantry to welcome Sir Roderick, his lady, and the young heir; but there were preparations made inside the house on a grand scale; the hall and the principal rooms were hung with evergreens; the side-board and dining table were loaded with plate; and dinners of six courses were to be served for eight days; all this only for the strangers, as they were called, and Lady Rawdon's family, which consisted of Sir Edward, his lady and three daughters. Not one of the country gentry were invited, nor do I think they were aware that such guests were expected.

"In due time they arrived, a bitter cold evening it was in

the beginning of December, the sleet and hail pattering on the old walls, the wind howling and seeming to rise in great gusts from the earth, as if the snatch spirit was abroad and had been permitted to let loose the winds from the four quarters of Heaven, and concentrate them on the old house. Thrice were our lights blown out, as we went to the great door to welcome them home, and at last we were obliged to give up attempting to carry our lanterns outside from the impossibility of keeping them or even ourselves steady; the elements were giving a wild welcome.

"The servants, with Joseph at their head (we had a full complement of men and women both, in the house then), raised a shout of joyous welcome as the carriage stopped at the great door, and the words of the ladies inside, were kind enough, more so than I expected they would be.

"Lady Roderick was very pale, and wearied like, but notwithstanding that, the servants all said softly to each other, 'how beautiful' as she stood under the chandelier in the hall; and the boy in his nurse's arms was equal in beauty to what the Baron of Brackely (as every one in the house except his father called Charlie) was in his second year, and that was saying much.

"Sir Roderick hurried his wife off to her own rooms as soon as possible, almost before the first words of welcome were over, saying she was wearied out and needed rest. I followed them; she shivered as she entered her apartment, and the first words he uttered was a complaint of the cold and damp air of therooms.

"So well he might complain, these rooms were never used except on great occasions when the house was full of company, and at such times they were regularly aired and heated for a week previous; but on the return of Sir Roderick to the home of his ancestors, to his own house, bringing his wife

and child to their home, the fires were lit only two hours before their arrival.

“ I wished to warm and air the rooms as they had always been done heretofore ; but the old lady would on no account allow of its being done, on two occasions ordering the fires to be put out, and seeing to it herself that her orders were obeyed. It was by stealth that I aired the sheets and blankets which were put upon the beds, taking them to my own room and airing them after all were at rest but myself.

“ Sir Roderick ordered the fires built up as high as possible, but all in vain ; the rooms were as cold as death ; the windows rattled, and the wind seemed to blow from every corner, it was indeed one of the coldest and fiercest nights I ever remember. The child’s room was an anti-room of their own, and the father had his little crib placed as close to the fire as possible, the child was stout and hearty, he ate his supper and ran about, till wearied with play, he fell asleep, and the cold did him no harm ; but my heart grieved for the beautiful young mother, and I saw her husband’s eye was restless and anxious.

“ It soon became evident that a physician must be sent for and all that night the lights went not out, in that curtained room. Ere the day dawned a second son was born to Sir Roderick, but the spirit of his young wife had sought a purer sphere, and her beautiful face dwelt in everlasting night. I wondered then at the look of calm happiness with which she closed the ivory lids over her violet eyes, and clasped her white hands on her bosom ; thank God I know the meaning of this now. ‘ So he giveth his beloved sleep.’

“ Sir Roderick’s sorrow was not loud but deep, it only ended when his heart ceased to beat. Six days after his arrival at Harford Yettes he laid his young wife’s body in the resting place of his fathers ; her prematurely born son

placed on her bosom; he would not allow the coffin to be lowered into the vault; but had it placed on trestles in the chapel above, and there it lay under a crimson velvet pall, and as long as he was able to walk abroad he visited it every day.

“ Sir Roderick lived two years after his wife, but those two years were a time of weariness and woe. Whether it was owing to the damp and cold of the rooms which he never left for a moment during the time his wife's body lay there, or the effects of his one great sorrow I cannot tell, but his wife was not cold in her grave when he began to take the same fits as Godfrey has now. At first they were very light, a mere convulsion of the mouth, preceding a fainting fit; but at last he was unable to leave his bed, and all the medicine he took only made him worse. When he was on his death bed, his mother died full of years and wickedness; the Lord have mercy on her soul! She was a woman of strong passions, and who would have her own way at whatever cost; and never hesitated to do evil if she thought what she considered good would come of it; she was my mistress for seven and forty years, and I should have mourned for her; but as ‘out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh,’ so the heart cannot sorrow but for those it loves; however the love or hate of a hireling was less than nothing to her in life, and she did not need it in death, her two sons sorrowed deeply for her, and Constance was wild with grief; no wonder, the old lady would have periled her soul for her.

“ Her eldest son was not long after her; one day Calesta, Godfrey's nurse, gave Sir Roderick a table-spoonful of his medicine instead of a tea-spoonful, and almost immediately he took a fit just such as Godfrey took the day you arrived here, tossed his arms and body about, and foaming at the mouth in great agony, passed away.

“Lady Laud was more distressed by his death than I thought she would have been, and although she did not say so, she evidently blamed Calesta for hurrying on the evil hour, in consequence of which the girl was sent home to her own land of France, whenever the funeral was over; doubtless it was a grave offence in Calesta to be so careless in administering the medicine intrusted to her, but that did not cause his death; any one with half an eye might have seen Sir Roderick was dying for months before.

“I suppose Godfrey must have caught the fits from his father, or what is more likely the disease was in the family, for Sir Roderick was not a month in his grave when Godfrey had a fit; it was no want of care that caused it; Sir Roderick made me promise in the presence of his brother and sister-in-law, several weeks before his death, to take charge of Godfrey when he was gone, and to become his attendant as I had been his own, until the child was old enough to be sent to school. I promised then, so God might help me in my need as I did his bidding, and kept my promise, but it was to little purpose; poor Godfrey grew worse, day by day, until it was evident to every one that he was silly, and then he was taken to Edinburgh to be examined by the lawyers and cognosed, and Sir Robert took the land and title in his own right, and Constance became Lady Laud; poor woman! I do not think she has seen many happy days since then.

“I must go now,” said the housekeeper suddenly interrupting herself, “the doors are not locked and Joseph is sure to be sound asleep by the hall fire; I have always to see to the doors myself whether he is at home or not; besides I am wearying you with my old stories of the dead, I have told you all I know about the beautiful mother, and there is little more to tell of the unfortunate child.”

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CHAPTER VIII.

*"The slayer, Death, is everywhere.
And many a mask hath he."*

ON Mrs. Morrison's return, I begged of her to resume her story.

"You are not wearying me," said I, but on the contrary have excited my curiosity to know what became of Sir Francis' two brothers, particularly of the Baron of Brackely, of whose mysterious disappearance I heard Lady Rawdon speak before I came to Harford Yettes."

"Well, I will tell you, as far as we know ; what I can tell is but of trouble and sorrow, and what you would hear of the Baron no mortal can know ; I fear the great day alone will declare it. Harry and Francis were both of them much older than Godfrey, and yet they sought no better sport than teasing him, if he was left alone with them for a moment ; but Charles, who was now in reality the Baron, as he had always been in name, ever took the child's part, and would soon send the others trooping into the house when he caught them at any of their tricks. Godfrey loved the Baron dearly, and the other, noble in this, as well as in birth and breeding, delighted in protecting the child, and as he grew older used to bring him to the garden, or the hill, or wherever he went. He called Godfrey his little son, and when he came home for the holidays, the child would clap his hands and call out, "The Baron," "The Baron;" and even now silly as he is, remem-

bers the Baron well; he never goes into the room where his picture hangs without getting upon a chair that he may kiss it.

“Lady Laud took all possible pains to have him cured, she herself took him twice to Edinburgh and had the advice of the best medical men there, but all in vain; and although I know well that she does not like Godfrey, yet she always speaks kindly to him, and ever since his father’s death she has made a rule of having him in her own sitting-room for half an hour every day, when she gives him fruit or sweets; but although it is her Ladyship’s wish to see Godfrey happy, that makes her give him such things, yet I have often thought that like his medicine they were only a means of feeding his disease.

“But I must go on with my story; when Godfrey was just turned six years, the boys came home for the summer holidays. The Baron was fourteen years old, tall of his age, and the handsomest boy in all the country. His mother was never tired of going about with him and his brothers, as old Lady Hugh used to go about with herself and Lady Rawdon. Harry and Francis were both tall handsome boys, but not like Charles; he was her darling, she saw no daylight to him, she could not bear him to be an hour out of her sight. He was as clever as he was good and beautiful; he never came home from school without a prize, and in his fourteenth year he gained a gold medal, won in a class of boys three and four years older than himself.

“They had been nearly ten days at home, when they all, Lady Laud, Sir Robert and the three boys, set off on a visit to Saltoun, there to spend a week with Lady Rawdon’s family, and thence to proceed to Learmont Castle. where they were to spend another week.

“From the time the boys returned from school, Lady Laud

had been so much occupied with her own children that she quite forgot her usual daily donation of fruit to Godfrey; he did not take medicine then regularly, as he does now, and it was on this occasion I began to notice the evil fruit did him.

"From the time the boys came home from school until their return from those visits, where they remained longer than was at first intended, there was a whole month the child had nothing to eat but his regular meals; in that month he grew rosy and strong, he had not one fit, and what was more he was fast losing his silly ways, and minding what was said to him. His memory came back, he remembered to-day what he was told yesterday, and I was in great hopes he would yet be like other folks. I have had dreams like that once or twice in his life, poor boy, but alas! they all end the same way.

"Well, when they returned, Lady Rawdon, her eldest daughter, and two of her grand children, accompanied them to Harford Yettes, so we had a full house.

"The Baron brought a pair of white doves for his little cousin, and the first one he asked for was Godfrey.

"Is that you, Godfrey?" said he in a tone of delight, when he saw the child looking so well, 'why you are quite a man.'

"I had dressed the child in a green velvet suit he had before his father's death, which I had enlarged myself for him, and he looked the most beautiful child in the room.

"The Baron's joy knew no bounds when he discovered that Godfrey spoke to him much as another child would have done, and not in the silly drawling way he used to do, and he would insist on bringing him, to show him to Lady Laud; I allowed him to do so, only keeping him in sight, lest they might give him fruit.

"Look at Godfrey, mama,' said he 'he is as strong and wise as any of us, see what a darling he is.'

“ I did not go into the room, but kept by the door watching Godfrey. I shall never forget the start of surprise or the scowl my lady gave when she looked at the child, but she recovered herself saying :

“ ‘ Yes he is looking well, but he will never be any wiser than he is, never be anything but a fool.’

“ ‘ See how he answers, mama,’ said the Baron, as he began questioning Godfrey.

“ To all he said he received correct though child-like answers.

“ ‘ Charles,’ said his mother, ‘ you are nearly as foolish as he is ; don’t you know that if he recovers his wits, you can never be Lord of Harford Yettes ; his father was Sir Robert’s elder brother, and the lands are as strictly entailed as the title.’

“ ‘ But, mama,’ said the noble boy, ‘ what difference does that make ? If the land is not justly mine, I ought not to have it ; and I would rather see Godfrey strong and like ourselves than be king of England.’ His mother did not answer, but turned away with an expression not easy to be defined. There was no love for Godfrey in her face, that is sure ; but there was another feeling there, contending with admiration for her own noble-souled son. She passed, without observing me, in the half lighted hall, saying to herself in words hardly audible :

“ ‘ He’ll be the greatest and best lord that Hartford Yettes has ever known ; and lord he must be at whatever cost.’

“ Poor woman she little new what was coming. When her ladyship had entered her own room I went for Godfrey, and telling the Baron that I wished to keep him by me, to prevent his eating fruit or sweets, brought him away. I was determined to watch him, as I had promised his father I would, and I had great hopes then and for months after that he would yet be the knight.

"While the others were amusing themselves in the drawing-room that evening, the Baron came to my room, and after tossing the balls and work in my basket for a while he said: 'You nursed papa and I both, Morrison, did you not?'

"I nursed your papa, my dear, but although I was understood to have the charge of you, you had two nurses, and your grandmama superintended everything herself, my charge was only a name, you were the best cared for, and the most precious child that has been in Harford Yettes in my time and that is nearly fifty years.'

"Do you love me as well as you loved papa, Morrison?"

"I love you better than ever I loved your papa or your uncle either.'

"And do you love Godfrey as well as you loved me?" enquired he with a searching look.

"I love Godfrey very dearly, but he was two years old before I saw him, and we always love those best whom we have known in infancy.'

"His face wore a troubled look, and after a minute or two in which he seemed lost in thought he said:

"Poor little Godfrey, what a pity his own father and mother died; I wish I was a man I would take him to London and take care he should never eat fruit, and have one of the best physicians there to care for him.

He mused a while, and then as if a new thought had entered his head,

"Morrison if I were to promise to give you a hundred pounds when I am a man, would you take such good care of Godfrey that he would never have another fit?"

"I could not promise were you to give me a *thousand* pounds that he would never have another fit; but I promise

you, as I promised his father, that I will take the same care of him as if he were my own.'

"Morrison," said he, very seriously, 'do you know that Godfrey is the true heir of Harford Yettes?'

"Yes, I know he would be if he was wise, but if he is foolish he can neither be heir of land nor title.'

"But Morrison, he was not foolish to-day, and I am sure he would be as well as any one if he was taken proper care of.'

"I was about to reply when a servant came to say Lady Laud wanted him in the drawing-room.

"Good night, Morrison," said he gaily as he obeyed the summons, 'I will speak to you again about this before I go to-morrow.'

"On the morrow they were to return to school; alas! alas! it was a dark to-morrow, would that that day had never rose or set.

"Next morning Godfrey was sent for to have his breakfast of bread and milk at the side table with the younger boys.

"As I placed the child upon his chair I whispered the Baron to take care of what Godfrey ate, and he nodded cheerfully in reply, saying:

"No fear I'll take care of that.'

"Lady Laud had desired me to see some work given out to the women, who were employed to make clothes for the poor on the estate, and I went to the left wing for the purpose, this was a little after nine o'clock, and by ten I had cut out and given to two of the women large bundles of work; they were about to depart when one of the servants opened the door of the room, looked in hurriedly saying, 'Is the Baron here,' and as hurriedly departed, leaving the door open behind her.

"I don't know why these words should have alarmed me,

but certain it is, that that moment, I felt as if some great calamity had taken place; I went immediately to the breakfast-room in search of Godfrey, where I found him, together with Lady Rawdon's two little grand-daughters, it was strange to see them there alone, the breakfast did not seem to be over, indeed it seldom was when we had company until eleven o'clock, yet every one had left the table; what could it mean."

"I saw from the open window the two younger boys running across the lawn, servants with quick feet and eager faces going to and fro; the whole household high and low astir. I was not long in learning the cause of all this commotion, the Baron was nowhere to be found, and his mother was lying in her chamber as void of sense or motion as the dead; one moment he was speaking to her at the glass door leading into the garden, the next he was gone, and he was never seen by mortal eyes again! From the instant he was missed his mother knew, what we all became convinced of at last, that the boy had been taken by the Snatch Spirit; she never said so, there was no need, we all knew it well, but she was the first to whom it was revealed; poor woman she lay on that bed for weeks without opening her lips or her eyes; God knows how she lived in all that time.

"It passed at last, as everything sad will pass, but Lady Laud never smiled or wept after it; the fountain of her tears as well as her smiles was sealed.

"Sir Robert died that year, and she followed him to the grave without a sigh; two years afterwards Harry, the second son's body was brought home from school, and it was interred in his mother's sight without a shadow passing over her face, the bitterness of death was past for her; and for years she was equally indifferent to everything else until pecuniary troubles came; she has reason to bless God they did come;

that is what made her rouse herself and become like the world again.

“What or who is the Snatch Spirit?” I asked.

“That I cannot tell or any one else now living, but there is a tradition, that an evil spirit has his abode in or about this house, who is called the Snatch Spirit, because he has power to take away a human being from the midst of others just as he took the Baron.

“Some years before I came to live at Harford Yettes a young lady was spirited away in the same manner; she was a distant relation of Sir Hugh’s and folk said he liked her better than the one he married, who was also his cousin, and a great heiress to boot, but his mother was a strong-minded woman, as all the ladies of the house have been, and she set her mind on his marrying Blanche Laud, and so he did without her giving herself much trouble. When Sir Hugh was twenty-one years old there was a great feast given in honour of his birth day; there was dancing on the green, and Edith the one he loved was chosen by the young knight for every dance; she went into the house to bring some trifle or other she wanted, and in her absence, Sir Hugh danced with Blanche Laud to please his mother.

“But Edith remained so long that her young lover became impatient and went to bring her again among the dancers, and at last every one in the house sought for her, as more than fifty years afterwards we sought for the Baron.

“But as he never was seen, neither was she, the Snatch Spirit had them both.

“Joseph’s grandmother, whose age was a hundred and ten years, remembered the time when it was not uncommon for people to be taken by the Snatch Spirit, until at last those who had angered the family, or were supposed to be in their way

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would hardly dare to come near Harford Yettes, but that was in the old time when there was little fear of God in the land ; however he has power yet, or the Baron could not have been taken from among us in broad day as he was.

"Is it not more likely," said I, "that instead of a spirit being the cause of the boy's disappearance, there is some well in or out side the house into which he may have fallen."

"My dear lady," said she, "there is not an inch of collar-ing under this house in one direction or another ; and there is neither well nor stream on the land that was not searched for months to discover his body ; his father would have given half his land for the poor consolation of burying him ; it was sorrow for his son that sent him to his grave ; no, no, his body is not on this earth, it is only the last day that will declare that secret as it will many others."

"And Godfrey ; how did he become what he is ? his fits returned ?"

"Aye, they did that ; but not for a long time ; he was getting to be the finest child in the country, when one day, without any apparent cause, he took a fit, or rather a succession of fits, much like what you saw him take the day you came here, and they never left him since.

"How did you come to dress him in that horrid-looking grey frock ?"

"I never dressed him in it ; not with my own will. But some how, when the property was mortgaged for Sir Francis' debts, there arose a report in the country that Godfrey was not foolish ; and this coming to the ears of the person who held the mortgage, frightened him so much, that he wrote to Lady Lar . . . on the subject, saying he would come himself and see the heir. At that very time the poor boy's fits were worse than ever I saw them ; he would in his agony tear his clothes,

so Lady Laud got a frock of dreadnought cloth made for him in case he would tear off his other clothes before the stranger. The man came and was satisfied that his money was safe, but Godfrey was never allowed to put on another dress again; many a salt tear that grey frock has taken from my old eyes."

Long after the good old housekeeper had gone to rest I sat thinking over what she had been telling me. The saddest part in the whole drama was that now passing on day by day, in which poor Godfrey, the rightful heir of title and lands, had to wear out a joyless existence in his own house, clothed in the dress of a maniac; and the question came again and again, what will become of him when Mrs. Morrison, who now tends him with a mother's love, is laid in the earth.

During Philip's illness dumb Hannah would come several times during the day to the door of the room where he lay, putting in her head as if she would ask whether he were better; if I was alone, she would then enter, bringing a few wild berries or earth nuts, carefully placed between two leaves, begging of me by looks and gestures to accept them for the sick child.

Philip was hearty and rosy again before Lady Laud's return; but I felt so weary with nursing and night-watching, that I was glad to resign my place to my mother-in-law, and ascend again to my nest in the tower. On the following morning I felt so unwell that I was quite unable to go down to breakfast, and desired the child's maid, who always came to call me in the morning, to say to Lady Laud that I wished to keep quiet for a few hours, and would breakfast in my own room; my head ached during the whole day, so that it was towards evening ere I felt inclined to go down stairs. As I descended the staircase leading from the tower, I felt the soft evening air blowing so freshly from the open hall door

at the back of the house, that instead of seeking Lady Laud in her sitting-room, where I knew she would be at that hour, I went to enjoy the breeze outside.

In passing the room Lady Laud called her work room, the windows of which reached to the ground and opened on the grass plot below, I looked up to see if Hannah was at her post; there she sat, close by the open window, hard at work: the dejected sullen look on her face it always wore when she had been receiving chastisement from her mistress' staff; I feared this would be the case; during Lady Laud's absence, Hannah had taken a great fancy to wandering in the fields instead of endeavouring to complete the rather large task set her to finish by the lady's return home.

Looking up from her work as I approached the window she gave a gesture expressive of pleasure on seeing me, putting one finger on her lip in token of silence, she beckoned with the other hand for me to come in by the window; I did so, and when I entered she held me back so that I might look in a mirror placed exactly opposite the door of my mother-in-law's room; and there I saw Sir Francis leaning against the mantle-piece! Lady Laud was seated at one side of the fire, the bright glow from which lighted up the figure of her son as he stood in front of it, and the face of the mother which was turned towards him. They were speaking earnestly and in no low tones.

The sight of Sir Francis whom I had such good cause to dread, and who I believed a few minutes before to be so far away, almost deprived me of breath, and self-possession at the same time; I think I must have fallen to the ground but for Hannah, who holding me by each of my arms above the elbow pressed me into a seat, still by her look enjoining silence and pointing to the looking-glass. The first words I heard were

those of Sir Francis; he spoke with violence of voice and gesture:

"If she can't be got rid of in any other way I'll shoot her. Moses has a caption out against me and to jail I must go to rot there for life, because I have her like a millstone tied around my neck, while if she was gone, Lady Blanche's two hundred thousand pounds would soon stop all their cursed clamorous throats, pay all the mortgages on Hartford Yettes, and leave enough to make us the richest family in the country after all; curse that fool of a Doctor who would have it I was dying, and a thousand other curses on my own chicken-heartedness, but for that, no one would have known anything about her. Where is she?"

"In her own room," was the reply.

"Confound her," said he stamping his heel against the floor with a gesture of impatience, "unless my right hand forgets its cunning she shan't be there to-morrow morning. Where is the imp?"

"Wherever he is," replied Lady Laud, "touch but a hair of his head and Godfrey will be Baron of Harford Yettes in six months, whoever you marry, Philip shall be Baron; as to the mother, she would be better dead than alive for her own sake as well as yours; but the child is my grandchild, a true Laud, he is as dear to me almost as Charlie was, and the only living thing I have ever loved since I lost my noble boy, and if he doesn't fill Charlie's place, you never shall."

Lady Laud spoke these words in a loud voice, her finger raised as if to give emphasis to what she said, her firm mouth and flashing eye telling that she had both the will and the power to carry her threat into execution.

"Their is no use talking in that way," replied her son, in a calmer tone than before, as if desirous of conciliating her. "I

told you before I don't care a single straw whether he lives or dies, but I do care to be free of his mother, whom I hate with the hate of hell."

I did not wait to hear another word, but holding up my finger to Hannah I slipped out by the window as I had entered; I had no time or self-possession to form a plan as to what I was to do, or where to go, but I knew too well I was not safe an hour in that house, and I also knew from past experience and what I had just heard Lady Laud say that Philip would be well cared for until I would claim him.

I flew up stairs to find my bonnet and shawl, my legs tottering under me with fear, I could scarcely open the drawer in which my shawl lay, my fingers trembled and my frame shook as if I had an ague fit; I heard a step on the stair-case, on the landing, in the room; I shook with dread, Lady Laud was beside me; the twilight was deepening into night, there was but little light left, yet as she stood between me and the window, I saw her face well; there was not a trace of emotion on lip or brow, the expression of her whole countenance was composed as I ever saw it in her drawing-room at Rayton house.

"I expected to find you in bed," said she, "you must not think of going down stairs, I will send Hannah to make up your room, you will rest on the sofa while she does so, and then go to bed again, by doing so you will feel well and strong on the morrow."

I was too much bewildered to answer nor did she wait for my doing so, but at once turned and left the room, locking the door as she went out, and taking the key from the lock! I was completely stunned, and sunk down on the floor to prevent myself from falling, my doing so brought to my recollection the day when I sat on the floor of my garret room in my aunt's house, while smarting under Captain Young's harsh

treatment ; in the same train of thought came the image of one, who had ever shielded me from harsh look or word, in whose presence was protection, and who, could he see me now, or know the strait I was in, would stir Heaven and Earth to save me, tears came to my eyes and poured down like rain, most blessed tears

I sat there on the floor, looking up into the grey sky until the moon rose in the heavens and the stars came out one by one. I was waiting for my death, I expected nought else ; I had an impression that Lady Laud would accompany her son when he came to perpetrate the evil deed. I wondered they waited so long, it must have been far in the night ; the moon had now rounded the tower, and all inside was enveloped in darkness, although the skies were yet clear with the light of stars ; there were footsteps on the staircase, and the sound of voices in low constrained speech, I knew my hour was come, and waited breathless, and with beating heart for the key turning in the lock which would admit my murderer, but the footsteps came not nearer, they continued to talk, not close to the door, nor even on the landing but away on the staircase ; minutes passed, they were still there, more minutes, they came not nearer, I rose slowly, and moving so as not to make the least noise, I went to the door and putting my eye to the key-hole, saw Lady Laud and her son standing on the last step of the staircase, she held in one hand a lantern, while with the other she was endeavouring to arrange the candle which seemed to be broken ; having done this she placed the lantern on the floor, and as she did so I saw behind them several steps down the staircase outside the bannister the top of Hannah's head ; I could only see her hair and eyes, but I saw that the latter were intently fixed on Lady Laud and Sir Francis.

In a second or two Lady Laud lifted up the lantern, and giving it to Sir Francis, raised a plank in the flooring with a broken knife ; as she did so she spoke in a louder tone than before, and I could catch her words as she said :

“ The rod is so stiff with rust I fear it will not swing.”

As she spoke she sighed deeply, and a look of intense agony passed over her face.

“ Never mind,” was her son’s reply “ open it, and when all is safely over, I will come and shut it up long before day.”

There was a slight movement on the staircase, they both gave a startled look in each other’s faces, and then turned in the direction of the bannister ; but Hannah’s head was no longer visible ; Lady Laud said something too low for me to hear and having replaced the plank which she had raised several inches, they both retraced their steps walking softly down the staircase as if they feared being heard ; I was again in darkness, and it seemed the more profound from the gleams of light I had seen through the key-hole while they were in sight ; the darkness and silence was to me horror, because my soul was filled with fear, yet I thanked God in my inmost soul for my respite from death short though it might be.

Out in the sky above me there was still enough of light to see the dark clouds rolling slowly along like great waves, putting out one by one the pale stars as they met them in their course ; soon the whole Heavens were one mass of darkness, but I still kept my eyes fixed on the black clouds although unable to distinguish in them size or motion, there was less fear there, than within the walls that I knew were so soon to witness a foul murder.

As I looked the clouds parted for a moment and disclosed a bright star ; the sight was so sudden, so unexpected it almost brought me joy, certainly hope.

I knew little of God then, but my grandmother had taught me the nature of prayer in my childhood, and in after years Dominic Sampson had told me of the great All Father who had made the Heavens and all the host of them, and yet cared for such frail creatures as the young ravens and heard them when they cried unto Him ; and that great God had sent His only son to live a sorrowful life here on earth and die on the cross for such as me ; and as I gazed on that star, I thought that perhaps it had looked down on me in my girlhood when I sat in the black depths of the Elfin Kirk ; and I felt in my soul a strong conviction, that He who sent John MacBeth to help me there, would even now save me from the hands of those who were about to destroy me, and I knelt in full faith of His power and His presence before the Lord on high, mightier than the noise of many waters, yea, than the mighty waves of the sea, and His own words seemed written out with a pen of fire in my sight, " I shall not die but live, and declare the works of the Lord. It is he that giveth salvation unto kings, who delivereth David his servant from the hurtful sword, who toucheth the mountains and they smoke," and the comfort he sendeth to His people who cry unto Him, He gave unto me, even me.

In looking back on the past hour, I saw a probable respite from death in the curiosity which prompted Hannah to watch the steps of her mistress, by climbing the staircase outside the bannister ; were it not for this little circumstance, most likely the evil deed would have been consummated ere now, and a hope amounting to faith, sprang up within my soul that God would send His angel to cause something else to frustrate their plans until morning ; with the morning light, and the sun, living men walking abroad, aid might come.

I had such a fear of death, such a strong desire to live, that

life on any terms was a thing of joy ; now that they seemed to be fading from my view, the green earth, the flowers and trees, the sun and blue sky, my baby, everything I had so loved were dear beyond utterance, and in my woe at the prospect of leaving them by a violent death, a low wail escaped my lips ; recalled by the sound of my voice to my need of help from Him who ruleth heaven and earth, I clasped my hands in my agony and cried aloud, " Oh save me from this death my Father and my God." I looked up again to the star ; there it still shone and now the clouds had rolled away so that a great space of grey surrounded it, as I looked a flash of sheet lightning illumined the heavens, lighting up my room, and for a moment shewing the things on my toilet as bright as day, there were some flowers there which Philip brought me in the morning ; the sight of these flowers, shown me by the lightning, seemed to breath new hope to my soul as if in them were a promise of help.

I remained at the door, every now and then putting my eye to the key-hole, expecting and dreading to see the light betokening the return of Lady Laud and her son. At last I saw a faint light ascending the staircase and as it came to the turn, Hannah appeared carrying a candle almost covered by a tin pail ; on reaching the landing she laid down the candle near the window, and taking from her sleeve a broken white similar to the one Lady Laud had used, inserted it at the edge of the plank as she had seen her mistress do ; she passed the knife along the edge of the plank, again and again, as she did so stopping every second or two and looking behind with her head to one side, as if she were listening. I asked myself, why should a deaf-mute listen ? At last the board rose to the pressure of the knife under it, and she then raised it with both her hands, it was a large trap-door and as it came

up a harsh grating sound struck on the ear as from a key turning in a rusty lock, and then the trap door suddenly swung upright, disclosing a large hole on either side.

When Hannah saw her work complete, she smiled, such a horrible smile, I shall never forget it, and then blowing out the candle descended the staircase with the same stealthy step as she had come up ; so silently that I could not distinguish a single footfall.

What could be the meaning of this ? was it possible that Hannah was a naccomplice of her wicked mistress, whom, if ever the expression of the face reveals the secrets of the heart, I knew she hated. Why should she wish to destroy one who had never done her any evil, never looked at her unkindly ? but on the contrary since the day I first set foot in Harford Yettes endeavoured by every little kindness in my power to lighten the burden which her life of silence imposed.

This was but the thought of a moment, I discarded it at once, it was to Hannah I owed the knowledge of Sir Francis' arrival, and that his mother plotted with him to take away my life ; had I gone to the parlour to receive the warning a few minutes sooner I might now have been far from Harford Yettes, and yet, what could she mean by opening that horrible trap ? why not try to enter my room and give me warning ? she could not know I was locked in, and were I to leave my room in the-darkness the first step I took would surely lead to death.

The lightning, which had continued at intervals all night, accompanied by the sound of distant thunder, had now increased to a perfect storm, a great peal of thunder seemed to break over the tower and shake it to its foundation ; as the loud rumbling died away in the distance, a sound of footsteps and voices talking in a low tone again fell on my ear ; I put

my eye to the key-hole and listened with a beating heart; I felt sure my hour was come; the footsteps came nearer, and a light was visible, not in the staircase, but ascending the opposite wall of the tower; all at once the persons ascending the staircase stopped and again spoke to each other, but owing to the noise of the elements without, I was unable to distinguish a single word; I was conscious of one of them retracing his steps down the stairs and along the passage, while the other, with heavier step, continued to ascend; the latter was Lady Laud, and as she became visible in her ascent, I saw the reason of the light appearing on the wall and not being diffused throughout the staircase; the lantern she carried was three-sided, two sides being of japanned tin and one of glass; from the way in which she held it, the light was thrown on her own person and the wall behind, while the staircase in front was left in darkness. What a concentration of wicked, yet distressed thought, her compressed lip, bloodshot eye, and knitted brow unfolded, as she walked slowly up the steps holding the lantern in one hand and her gown in the other. She was without her staff, a thing I noted, because I never knew her to leave her room without it; and every thing about her, every fold of her dress, seemed to assume an awful importance in those dread moments, when as she came nearer and nearer, I believed she was bringing with her death in the most horrible shape; and so she was, but not to me; she reached the top, and deceived by the way in which she carried the light, placed her foot on the space left by the open trap, and fell with a heavy splash into the water below! She uttered one word—God! and no sound again broke the silence.

Ere many minutes passed Sir Francis called to his mother from the bottom of the stairs.

“ Turn the light in this direction ; it is so infernally dark that I cannot see my way.”

Receiving no answer he ascended with a quick step, giving vent to his ill-humour by more than one imprecation. In another moment, should he reach the top of the staircase, I knew he would be gone, and putting my mouth to the key-hole I called out with all my strength : “ Keep back.”

“ Ha ! imp of darkness,” said he, “ was it you who put out the light ? ” adding, as if addressing his mother, “ how did she get at it, with the door shut ? ”

Scarcely had the words escaped his lips when he fell into the vault ; but not down in the water as his mother had done. The trap swung with a heavy bang above him ; I knew it must have shut down so suddenly as to have caught hold of some part of his clothes or person. He spoke several times, but his voice came with a hollow indistinct sound, of which it was impossible to distinguish the words. I fancied he called “ Innes,” and rising, I flew to the window, and tried to raise the sash, but my trembling frame was unequal to the task. With my hands I beat the glass of the window in pieces, and called aloud with all my might for help ; it was in vain ; there was no one astir in that black wild night.

I spent the time until daylight in alternately calling from the window, in the hope that some one might be abroad and come to my cry, and in listening at the door, that I might discover if the unfortunate man still lived. Long ere the darkness was dispelled by the rays of the rising sun, there was neither sound nor motion in the tower, save my own voice calling out into the night.

As the daylight advanced I tied a scarlet handkerchief outside my window, in hopes it would attract attention. I was hoarse with calling out, and worn with the night of dread

and excitement through which I had passed. I sat down in the window recess that I might catch the first sight or sound of people stirring, and get some one to release myself and ascertain if Sir Francis yet lived. My eyes fell on a little printed calendar lying on the window sill,—the past day and night with all its horrors was the sixteenth of September!

CHAPTER IX.

And I will strengthen them in the Lord;
And they shall walk up and down in his name.

As the dawn increased I went again to the key hole ; the trap had fallen down on Sir Francis' hands near the wrists. the fingers were all that were visible from where I stood ; his body was evidently suspended by the hold the trap had taken of his hands and wrists as he fell ; he must have fallen forward upon the open trap as it swung upright, and instinctively clinging to it, his hands becoming fastened between the trap and the flooring prevented him from falling into the vault as his mother had done.

As I gazed at the fingers stiffened in death, Hannah came up the staircase, and stooping over the trap, looked with surprise not unmingled with terror at the sight before her ; she stood looking down on the trap for a few minutes with a stupefied and frightened air, and then touched each hand, at first lightly, and afterwards with a pressure which left an indentation for a moment on the dead finger ; having satisfied herself that the hands were those of the dead, her look of terror vanished and one of pleased triumph succeeded, making her homely face look almost handsome.

Without thinking of her infirmity I called out her name. She started and looked in the direction of the door whence the voice proceeded. Hannah was not deaf ! I called a second time, and Hannah recovering from her surprise, and staring at the door, walked deliberately down stairs.

How strange it is that while we are overwhelmed by

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anxiety or sorrow, the hum of a bee, the carrol of a bird, some "trifle light as air" attracts our attention, and for the moment our trouble or woe is forgot and we moralize over causes and effects which for a time seem to obliterate every trace of our sorrow. It may be that the Father of our spirits, who knoweth all our griefs and the need we have for these short respites, sends them, "for His grace faileth never." It was in this frame of mind I found myself philosophizing on what could have tempted poor Hannah to counterfeit an infirmity which must have subjected her to such a constant series of petty mortifications as well as petty deceits; and for such a long term of years. She was an inmate of the house before the birth of Sir Francis; Mrs. Morrison told me both as boy and man, he was very cruel to Hannah, so much so that she used to dread his coming home, and try to hide in the out-houses at the Grange that he might not find her, but all in vain, sooner or later she was sure to be found and horse-whipped, for what he called, her laziness and insolence in hiding herself; while his mother heard of such doings with indifference, or sometimes with an approving expression, such as, "It will do her good, she stands in much need of punishment."

The start Hannah gave when her name was called so suddenly, explained to me her conduct of the past night; she knew more than I did; she had been a silent listener to the conversation between the mother and son and was cognisant of all their plans. She most likely followed them in their first ascent, to prevent if possible the evil they intended should befall me, and when they were scared by her from carrying out their first attempt, she probably formed the plan which resulted so fatally, entrapping them in their own net. In after years Hannah was found to be only tongue tied,

and when she had learned the use of speech she said that when dismissed by Lady Laud for the night she came up the outside of the tower stairs determined to remain there, watch their proceedings and prevent me from falling into the trap on my leaving my chamber in the morning, which Sir Francis and his mother intended I should do. She heard Lady Laud say that the trap on being opened, and a couple of screws taken out, would remain balanced as if the flooring was perfect, but the lightest foot placed on either side would make it instantly swing and precipitate whoever set foot on it to the bottom of the vault; she did not touch the screws, but thought that by leaving the vault open they would, on finding it so, be frightened from their purpose, by supposing the Snatch Spirit had opened it.

The poor creature had remained outside the stair bannister, until both mother and son had fallen into the vault; the fall of Lady Laud took her so completely by surprise, and so frightened her, that outside the staircase as she was, in the dark, and without the power of speech, she was unable to warn Sir Francis of his danger; she heard me call to him and his reply, but under the influence of terror she could not tell the import of our words.

Hannah never expressed any sorrow for what she had done, nor do I think she felt any; she hated them both, and perhaps was well pleased that her plans had ended so. The expression of her face as she touched Sir Francis' hands, was very like satisfaction.

Hannah was not long in returning accompanied by Joseph. The poor man seemed transfixed with horror at the sight before him, and lifting up both hands exclaimed, "My God!" in a tone of anguish, as if the words came from his inmost soul. He stooped down and touched the cold fingers as Hannah had

done, lifted one of them a little from where it lay on the trap-door, and then reverently and gently laid it down again.

I called out to him, but further than looking in the direction of the voice, he took no notice of what I said, going down stairs and returning instantly accompanied by Mrs. Morrison, the kitchen girl, and the two farm servants.

Joseph directed each of the men to take one of Sir Francis' hands in both their own, and thus making sure that the body would be held fast, he lifted the trap, and then aided in taking his master from the vault. The body was stiff and cold, the eyeballs staring wide open, and the lips drawn back in a hideous grin, disclosing the set teeth; the whole face distorted and betokening a death of lingering and intense agony.

Joseph uncovered his head reverently, and gently laid the body in the arms of the two men, saying as he did so—

“The Lord have mercy on his soul, and may God help my poor lady, and give her grace to keep her senses when she sees this sight.”

“God help us, who is to tell her this; the bitterest cup has been left to the last,” said Mrs. Morrison, in a voice of deep emotion, her face white as that of the corpse beside which she stood.

As they spoke, Mary, the kitchen girl, who had been looking down into the vault, called Mrs. Morrison's attention to something she saw there; she was immediately despatched for a lantern; the two men who had the body in their arms, meantime laying it on the landing beside the trap, and all four looking into the vault with pale and terror-stricken faces. When the lantern was brought it was lowered down into the vault by a rope, the men and women around, kneeling down leaned over the vault, following with eager eyes the lantern in its descent; simultaneously a cry of horror rose from the lips

of all ; they raised their heads and looked in each other's eyes as if they would read there the solution of the sight they had seen, and which had appalled their very souls. No one spoke, the men at a sign from Joseph, lifted the body of Sir Francis preparatory to carrying it from the tower, while he laid down the trap-door above the remains of his mistress with the same reverence he would have used in drawing over it a funeral pall.

They were all about to depart and leave me still locked up, when I called to them to open the door. Joseph tried to do so, but finding it locked said, " You must open the door yourself, it is locked inside."

" That cannot be," observed the housekeeper, " that door can only be locked from the outside ; the lock was put on in Sir Roderick and Sir Robert's boyhood, to prevent their locking themselves in, which they were in the habit of doing."

" You will most likely find the key in Lady Laud's chamber," said I ; " she locked the door last night, just as the day-light was departing."

Hannah shook her head, and pointing to the vault, made Joseph, who best understood her signs, comprehend that the key was in the vault with the body of her mistress.

Some carpenters' tools were procured, the lock removed, and I liberated. Upon the door being opened, I found they had spread a crimson cloth taken from one of the library tables over the trap door, as a mark of respect to the poor woman whose body lay below ; she was a harsh mistress, and they loved her not, not one of them, but they respected her as Lady Laud, their mistress, the head of a house which in their simplicity they believed to be the greatest in the land ; they had served her from a child, for more than half a cen-

tury, and with true feeling they paid the same deference to her remains, as they did to herself, when she lived and breathed among them.

The first use I made of my liberty was to lift up my soul in silent prayer to the God who had burst my bonds asunder and set my feet in a large room; the next, to visit Philip; there he lay safe in his little crib beside his nurse's bed, child and nurse both fast asleep. I kissed his rosy cheek, and kneeling beside his bed, praised the Lord again and again for my great deliverance.

Lady Laud's room, into which Philip's opened, was arranged in all its usual order, her toilet table with its white and silver utensils, its vase of fresh flowers, the lace drapery, all perfect, as the correct and tasteful eye of its mistress would have it; her bed was folded down for the night, but had not been occupied, and the now useless lace-trimmed cap and snowy linen gown lay upon the pillow.

I passed through the bed-room to the parlor beyond, in which from the mirror in the work-room I had seen her and Sir Francis the evening before; the fire had not yet died away in the grate, the lamp on the table was still lit, and shed a pale unearthly light in the gray dawn which struggled in through the closed curtains; two easy chairs were placed close to the fire on either side; against the corner of the mantel-piece leaned Lady Laud's staff; on the table next the chair lay an open book; I looked at the title, it was Hervey's Meditations among the Tombs! in the chair opposite lay a copy of Faust in the original.

The clock on the mantel-piece pointed to a quarter to five; scarcely ten hours had passed since I had listened to their words of wrath with a quaking spirit; they had now learned the worthlessness of the gold and rank which they had deter-

mined to buy at any price, and for which they were willing to peril their souls.

I wrote a note to Lady Rawdon telling her that a fatal accident had happened to Lady Laud and Sir Francis, the latter having only arrived at Harford Yettes the previous evening, and requesting her presence as quickly as possible.

In order to recover the body of Lady Laud, Joseph had a large aperture made in the bottom of the Tower ; it was found to contain a well, although the latter was not of great depth ; she must have been killed in her descent, before reaching the well, by knocking her head against the tower ; when the body was recovered her brains were found dashed to pieces and had bespattered her left arm and shoulder.

Lady Rawdon did not arrive until the following day ; having been from home when my messenger reached Saltoun ; this was well ; by the time she came both bodies were decently laid out in one of the chambers kept for state occasions.

Lady Rawdon's grief for her sister was deep and unfeigned. " Alas ! alas ! " said she, as she looked on the shattered head from which she herself had removed the white cloth covering, " the beautiful in life, how changed in death ! "

" My dear sister, " she said, half apostrophizing the dead, half speaking to me, " thine was a life of much disappointment and bitter sorrow. Few could have endured as she did, sustaining her part with such dignity and patience, dealing justly by all, and ever sacrificing herself to others ! "

This might have been true of the early part of Lady Laud's life ; it was sadly incorrect as a whole.

It is thus that even our nearest friends judge. " Who knoweth the soul of a man, but the spirit of a man that is in him. " Those who think they know us best, those of our kindred and our father's house, say we are cold and heart-

less, when our lives have been one long struggle to make ourselves beloved; until wearied with breasting waves of prejudice, we turn from "our own people," those we would have fain lavished all our love upon, and seek from strangers the sympathy we so thirst after; while on the other hand, those who have studied their own comfort, their own happiness, their own interest all their lives long, have by a wise-judged mode of speech on their own part, and the preconceived good opinion of others, had the credit of being most loving, kind, and true. The approbation of others, oftenest gained when least deserved, when least sought after, what wise man would sigh for thee! Let us seek the approving eye of the great All Father; this cannot fail us; let us cast our burden, whatever it be, on Him; let us "cease from man," and say, in full faith unto the Lord: It is time for thee, Lord, now to work; and as we do so, all misconceptions of word or deed will melt as the snow in the sunshine even in this world, and our true motives appear as surely as in yonder land, where each will know as he is known; where the grass never fadeth nor the rivers cease to flow.

The funeral of Lady Laud and Sir Francis was attended by all the neighbouring gentry, and, as the fashion of the country was, all the most intimate friends of the family returned to condole with Lady Rawdon and myself. There was no will made, but as the estate was entailed, Philip was to succeed his father as knight and proprietor of Harford Yettes.

I never allowed the child to be called Sir Philip, which Lady Rawdon would fain have done. I could not forget the threat of Lady Laud to her son on the last night of her life, "Touch but a hair of his head, and Godfrey shall be Baron of Harford Yettes in six months!"

One of the first changes I made, was to have Godfrey dressed like boys of his own age, and not in the hideous maniac-like frock he was accustomed to wear. I sent for a physician to the nearest city, and had his advice. It did not amount to much; but on being shown the medicine Godfrey was in the daily habit of taking, he denounced it as one sufficient of itself to produce the fits the boy was subject to, and to weaken his intellect, and if given in large doses would endanger his life; a dose three times the weight of the one shown to him, would produce violent fits, with foaming at the mouth, in less than half an hour after it was administered, causing great feebleness of brain and body for weeks.

Godfrey slept in a closet off the housekeeper's room, where the only light was a borrowed one, and the fresh air of heaven never entered. I had him removed to a large well-ventilated chamber, and took care that the rules laid down by Dr. Hamilton were regularly attended to, and the result was such as might be expected; every week told its tale of amendment in both body and mind.

While the doctor was in the house, I had him to examine Hannah. It seemed such an extraordinary thing for a mute not to be deaf likewise, that I hoped something might be done in her case also. Poor Hannah was only tongue tied, and after at least thirty-five or forty years' silence, was, by a few touches of the lance, in a few weeks able to speak—strange speech, strange voice! but better than none. Long habit made her silent. She seldom spoke except in-answer to questions.

I asked her why she counterfeited being deaf? her answer was it saved her from doing many things, which, if people

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thought she could hear, she would have been made to do. Hannah was as wise in her generation as her task-masters.

Very shortly I judged it necessary to engage a governess for Godfrey, and the young lady engaged for that purpose agreed to do her best to teach Hannah also. Poor Hannah! her mind was as blank as that of the wildest savage, as to any knowledge of God or a Saviour. No wonder she did not seem to regret the part she had taken in Lady Laud's and Sir Francis' death. She had no more idea of the immortality of her own soul than she had of the immortality of Maida. Her devotion to me was more like what we read of in novels than what we experience in life. On one occasion when I was ill and confined to bed, she insisted on sleeping at the door of my room for weeks, would start at the least sound, even if I turned in bed, and come to see if the nurse wanted anything.

By letters from Cuba I found that my grandfather would not return to Scotland until the ensuing spring. He had discovered that a great fraud had been perpetrated by the pretended failure of Dundas and Rogers; he had instituted proceedings against the parties implicated, and he hoped by the end of winter to recover the money, the supposed loss of which had caused me so much misery. The climate agreed with him; he had met with more than one old friend, and he felt quite pleased with the prospect of passing the winter in Havana.

The improvement in Godfrey was wonderful, he would now ask questions instead of sitting for hours gazing on vacancy, and could read stories instead of the sentences in his primer; he was becoming strong and healthy, would run and leap, climb trees and play ball like other boys,—although he still continued very childish,—childish, but not silly.

One morning he came to bring me to the parlour when the things were laid for breakfast, that I might see how nice he had made my chair. The chair he called mine was a low *fauteuil* covered with leather, on which I usually sat at work, with Philip playing by me when the weather prevented him from going out of doors. On accompanying him to the parlour, I found the chair shining as if it was wet, and on inquiring how he had done this, he pointed triumphantly to the cream-jug he had taken from the table, and in which he had placed a tooth-brush, saying:

“I did it with that and the tooth-ache brush.”

A few evenings afterwards, Miss Young, the governess, and I sat reading by the parlor fire. The tea-things were on the table, and Philip and ~~C. C.~~ *they* amusing themselves with some picture toys. Suddenly I heard ~~crack, crack,~~ and looking up I found Godfrey had placed the tea saucers ~~upside~~ down at equal distances upon the floor, and was amusing himself by walking from one to the other, they forming supports for his steps, and had succeeded in breaking several of the luckless saucers.

He was very anxious to be a “good boy,” as he used to say himself, and I took great pains to make him understand that God saw all he did, and that it was to Him he must go when he had done wrong, and ask Him to forgive him, and make him good.

One day about a week after he had broken the saucers, I heard Godfrey sobbing bitterly and talking to himself in his own room. On going to see what was the matter, I found the water ewer lying broken on the floor, with the water spilled all over the carpet; Godfrey standing with clasped hands looking at the mischief he had done, crying piteously,

and repeating over and over again in a voice of the most earnest entreaty, "Oh, God! make me good, 'cause I'm a bad boy! 'cause I'm a bad boy!"

These incidents of Godfrey's childish days took place in October. At Christmas he would have smiled at the idea of either stepping on the saucers, or painting a chair with the tooth-ache brush as being excusable in Philip, he himself being quite beyond such childish doings.

Before the long spring days were over I judged it expedient to have a tutor for Godfrey instead of a governess, as tending to give more manliness to his manners and ideas. Miss Young seemed so distressed by the prospect of leaving Harford Yettes, which she said was the first home she had ever known, that I retained her as a companion for myself; thus we were quite a large family, with the addition of Mr. Hutton, the young clergyman, who came as a tutor to Godfrey; and I suspect the happiest family who had lived in the old house for a long time.

I consulted Lady Rawdon on the propriety of having the old tower pulled down; I never could look at it without a shudder; within its walls I had suffered the terror of a life in one night, and it was most likely there that her nephew Charlie, the Baron of Brackley, as they called him still, had fallen when he disappeared so mysteriously. No doubt it was in that dread grave that the myth of the Snatch Spirit had its origin. If left there, it might yet, however effectually fastened up, be the cause of death and sorrow, as it had been for ages. It was of no use; there were abundance of pleasant rooms in the house, as well as Blue Beard chambers that were never opened; without its solitary nest perched up above all others, and its appearance only suggested thoughts of gloom.

Lady Rawdon agreed with me as to the propriety of having the tower removed although quite hopeless of its helping to elucidate the mystery of Charlie's disappearance. I think she still clung to the idea of his being alive, and that some day or other he would re-appear among them as suddenly as he had departed ; besides, she reasoned, the trap-door in the tower could not have been opened for ages, its very existence was unknown, had it been otherwise she herself would have been aware of such a place, and Lady Laud could not have become its victim

On the removal of the walls the bottom of the tower was found to be a perfect charnel house, presenting the appearance of a place in which skeletons had been piled one on another. Among the debris was found a silver cross an inch and a half long, which Lady Rawdon had given to her nephew some days previous to his disappearance, as also a penknife on the handle of which was deeply cut the word "Charlie."

In the early part of December we had a visit from a person giving his name as Mr. Moses, the Jew who held the mortgage on the property ; he was a low sized man with stout, broad shoulders, hook nose, over-hanging under lip, black bushy beard and moustache. He wished to be polite, but was evidently very angry. He had not heard of Sir Francis' death until his arrival at Harford Yettes, and evidently doubted the truth of the story. He produced an obligation from Sir Francis to deliver into his hands by the tenth of December, certain jewels which he had already seen, and on the faith of receiving which, he had advanced ten thousand pounds. These Lady Laud had told me were all pawned by her hopeful son years before.

I told him this, and that I was the widow of Sir Francis,

and that Philip was his son; on hearing this, his surprise almost overpowered his rage. Sir Francis had represented himself unmarried; and the money was the more freely given as it was understood that a marriage between himself and Lady Blanche Haringdale, the heiress of three hundred thousand pounds, was to take place at the New-Year.

The Jew seemed lost in thought for a few minutes, and then turning sharply round as if he saw his way out of the net in which he had been caught, said quickly:

“Your son is then heir to his father, Sir Francis Laud?”

“Sir Francis Laud had nothing to leave, he was in reality neither Sir Francis, nor proprietor of Harford Yettes; the son of his elder brother is alive.”

“What,” replied he, with a scornful laugh, “the idiot boy who was shown to me when I was here last?”

“He is no idiot; he was subject to fits, of which I hope he is now cured, and will, on obtaining his majority, succeed to his father’s land.”

“You can have no objection to show me this young man?”

“None whatever.”

I rang the bell and desired the servant to send Mrs. Morrison up-stairs. On her entrance the Jew exclaimed, at once recognizing her:

“Ha! this is his keeper!”

I took no notice of his words, but desired Mrs. Morrison to request Sir Godfrey to come down stairs and that I should wish Mr. Hutton to accompany him. It was the first time I had spoken of Godfrey as *Sir* Godfrey and I wished that she who had been his best friend, since his father’s death, should be the one who would first address him by his title. Godfrey was out of doors, and was some minutes in answering my summons; when he entered, his face all aglow with exercise,

I could not help admiring the handsome boy ; no wonder the Jew had some difficulty in recognizing Godfrey with his bright eyes, and dark curls, for the maniac-looking shaven creature he had formerly seen. !

The Jew stared for some minutes with a credulous look, while Godfrey returned the stare with more confidence than I had seen him exhibit ; perhaps he was impatient of being sent for from his out-door play ; certainly he knew not who the stranger was or for what he was sent into the drawing-room. " This," said I, addressing the Jew, and looking from him to Godfrey, " this young gentleman is Sir Godfrey Laud, son of Sir Roderick, the last rightful knight of Harford Yettes."

" You do not mean me to believe," said the Jew " that that young man is the fool who was shewn to me when I came about the mortgage."

As the man spoke of him as a fool, Godfrey's face became suddenly pale, and again crimson. With his changes of countenance came the conviction on the Jew's mind that it was the same he had formerly seen ; his lip fell and assumed an ashen hue. " I mean what I say," returned I, " the servants in the house and all the neighbouring gentry will bear witness to my testimony being a true one."

" Oh, the Yeden, the dogs," said he, the words coming from between his set teeth replete with rage ; " how these deceitful Nazarite dogs have laid themselves out for centuries to cheat the Israelite of his hard-won gold ; that boy is no more fool than I am—than I am"—said he again, repeating his own words in a tone of bitterness, and drawing in his breath between his compressed lips, while with staring eyes and voice full of scornful rage, he exclaimed, " if I had not been a greater fool than ever was born in my tribe, I would have known that their tales were false as he who reigns in Tophet ;

the circumstance of having the boy dressed up like a madman, would have made any one but a fool and an Israelite to doubt the truth of their stories."

The man had suffered a great wrong, and I was sorry for him. I rang for lunch which was brought up and placed before him; he pushed the tray and its contents from before him with such violence as almost to throw it from the table.

"I touch the filthy food of the accursed Yeden, blood, the hog, and the mouse, and all unclean things; no, may the blasphemous Yeden wallow in the mire of his own accursed food, until all the race have gone down with their leader into Tophet, pleasing themselves to the last, that they have spoiled the crushed Israelite."

He shook his clenched hand as he spoke, in the direction where I sat, and strode from the room and the house with a heavy tread.

After the Jew's departure I felt restless and uneasy; it was true I had neither act nor part in the disgraceful affair which led to his visit, but it was my child's father and grandmother who had planned and executed this worse than theft, and I felt humbled to the dust when I thought of the connection he must ever retain to such people. This train of thought seemed to haunt me more than the crimes which I knew they had or would have been guilty of. Two days passed and still it was the first thought with the dawning light, the last as my eyes closed in slumber. On the forenoon of the third day from the Jew's visit I had another from a Jew also, but what a difference between the handsome, dignified Hebrew gentleman, who introduced himself as the son of Mr. Moses, and the angry excited father. The son, one of the handsomest men I have ever seen, his hair and beard, which he wore long, of a brown chestnut, eyes of the same colour, with an earnest,

benevolent, yet very grave expression, which suited well with his peculiar cast of features; altogether his face reminded me strongly of a head of our Saviour by one of the old masters, which hung in our dear little drawing-room at Hillside; such was my second visitor, on this most unpleasant affair. His enquiries were much the same as his father's had been, and his surprise at the transformation in Godfrey, equally great. He said I would not have been troubled by this second intrusion as he termed it, but for the circumstance of his having been the medium by whose influence the loan was obtained. In explanation, he said he knew comparatively little of Sir Francis Laud; he was a schoolfellow of the three brothers, and Charles was his particular friend; they loved each other with the love that only boyhood knows, and one of the last acts of Charles' short life was a letter written to Alexander Moses on the morning of his mysterious disappearance, saying that they were to leave home for school that day, and urging his friend to join him at once. Upon the intelligence of Charles' death, he could not bear to return to the school, where everything around would remind him of the lost one, and consequently he saw little or nothing of Sir Francis until he was applied to by him in London, some years previous, to induce the elder Moses to lend him a thousand pounds, which loan was promptly returned and precluded the disgraceful affair which he had now come to investigate. I told him what I thought expedient, of the cause of Charles' death. His emotion was expressed in a deeper shade, a more earnest look in his dark eye, a slight trembling of the finely-cut upper lip. His surprise on seeing Godfrey "clothed and in his right mind" was visible in the compressing of his mouth, that most expressive feature; his silence was more eloquent than

words. Previous to his departure, he partook of lunch, together with Godfrey and myself, leaving me to meditate over the wondrous people he belonged to, living in all lands, yet acknowledging none as their own, clinging, alike in their poverty and great riches,—riches almost fabulous,—to the land where God buried Moses; their very names of strange accent, telling of foreign climes; lending their money to kings, they themselves living in narrow streets and obscure lanes, taught in the school of patience, to endure the life of oppression and the death of fire, eating all their lives long the unleavened bread and bitter herbs of exile, the wasting longing of the heart fed by the mara of their tears, pride and humiliation walking with them through the world wherever they go, trampled as the sand, unshaken as the centre of the universe, still worshipping the Living God who gave them the Decalogue; their Rabbi still reading to them that law, and teaching their children to pray to the great Jehovah in the grand old tongue the Prophets spake, still waiting for the promise made to the father of the faithful, ever living on the traditions of the past, 'mid good and ill, storm and sunshine, their faith never for one moment failing, never a single doubt casting its shadow on their souls, ever looking for the uprising of the sun which shall behold the *time* foretold by Zechariah, "when ten men shall take hold, out of all languages of the nations, even shall take hold of the skirt of him that is a Jew saying, we will go with you, for we have heard that God is with you."

Sometime after I told Lady Rawdon of my interview with the Jew. She heard me with a distressed air and with unfeigned surprise. She was not aware of the former visit of Moses to Harford Yettes, although she knew that the

estate was mortgaged during the life of Sir Francis, to a certain extent; the jewels she thought were in my possession. Fortunately the Jew had left the obligation of Sir Francis to deliver the jewels upon the table, where he threw it in his rage on discovering its worthlessness. When shown to her, she read it with a face expressive enough of her feelings, laying it down without a single remark.

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CHAPTER X.

O that in depth of heart
We were as pure as the white snow whose wing,
Gently the air doth part!

DURING the winter and spring my letters from Cuba gave me little hope of an early meeting with my grandfather; constant delays were made by the new firm, in the hope, he said, he had no doubt, of tiring him out; but it would not do, he enjoyed life there. His friends were anxious that he would remain, and if necessary, he was prepared to pass another winter in the Island; he had little doubt of ultimate success.

As my grandfather enjoyed good health then, and was willing to remain, I was very thankful he should do so until my claim on the estate of my father had been established and realized.

I became every day more convinced that Godfrey would yet inherit his own title and land; and in that case, Philip would have no claim whatever upon the estate, and I had known so much of the bitter evil of poverty that no present sacrifice would have appeared too great, which would have insured myself and child against future want.

It was true my grandfather's income was a handsome one, but it died with himself; and although now hale and younger-looking than many men of sixty, his age was nearly eighty, and I could scarcely hope his life would last until Philip was a man.

Summer passed away, a quiet and happy summer, Godfrey astonishing us all, learning so well to read, write, and even

to cipher. His was one of the most naturally amiable dispositions I ever met, always ready to help another; always on the side of the helpless or injured. A lame fowl would be his care for a week, until, by dint of strapping its leg, it could run with the others. The old house-dog, now almost blind, found a ready friend in Godfrey, who, on the slightest whine, would run from his sport, as he said, "to see if any one was teasing the old fellow?"

Godfrey's fits were a thing of the past, as from the first I surmised they would be. Since Lady Laud's death he had scarcely a fit which lasted more than a few minutes, and for more than a year he had none; but when we were congratulating ourselves on this, a circumstance occurred, which gave us all cause of uneasiness on this score.

Godfrey was in the dining-room with Mrs. Morrison, who was superintending the arrangement of the pictures, they having been taken down to be dusted. Lady Laud's staff hung there, in the place it had occupied previous to the time when her ladyship had thought fit to use it. In putting up one of the pictures the staff fell close to Godfrey's feet hitting him on the shoulder as it fell. The boy flew from the dining-room as if he was frantic, screaming wildly, and running into the room where I sat at work, fell into a violent fit in attempting to force himself between my chair and the wall. The fit though violent, did not last long, but he was weak and almost silly during the rest of the day, and so gave evidence that imagination might yet bring back his fits, perhaps his imbecility.

Mrs. Morrison accounted for his fear by telling me that previous to my coming to Harford Yettes he used to receive severe beatings from Lady Laud, and that he was so afraid of the staff, that if she but held it up he would run to the

Grange or any other out-of-the-way place to hide himself, and could only be persuaded to return by the assurance that her ladyship had gone to Saltoun, or some such tale.

The housekeeper said she had seen him often, since her ladyship's death, give hurried fearful glances towards the staff.

I determined that a fit should not occur again from the same cause, and a week afterwards when I believed the boy able to bear the excitement, I told him I was going to have the staff cut up into pieces and burn it in the parlor fire. For this purpose I had it brought out to the lawn and there chopped up by Joseph; Godfrey, Philip, and I standing by to see the operation. On its being cut up I took a piece myself and gave the rest to Godfrey and Philip to carry into the house. As the former took the pieces in his hand I observed him shudder. I took his other hand in mine, and so we walked into the house and burnt the whole. Philip laughed when he saw the bright blaze, and so did Godfrey. It was the first time I saw him laugh since he had the fit. He never had another, except indeed a fit of laughing.

We were to have grand doings at Christmas, and in order to have all the accommodation possible for our guests, whose names were to be legion, for every "Laud of name" was that day to dine with us in the great dining-room and sleep in the house, while all the tenantry were to eat roast beef and plum pudding in the hall, and gentle and simple were to unite in dancing there in the evening as they had done many a happy Christmas day of yore.

In order to prepare for this, the west wing of the building, where Godfrey's mother and father died, were to be put in order and aired for the occasion; these rooms had been little used since the last sad occupant was carried out from them to his grave.

Lady Laud had occasionally gone there to read or write; but she kept the key of the corridor, leading to the rooms, in her own pocket, and no one else was allowed to enter them; since her death they had never been opened.

I had the curiosity to accompany Mrs. Morrison when she went to superintend the cleansing necessary, after such a long period of neglect.

On entering the room which had been fitted up as a parlor for Lady Roderick, as Mrs. Morrison (who was the only person I ever heard speak of Godfrey's parents) called his mother, I found a desk of ivory inlaid with silver, lying open on one of the tables, and upon it a half-written letter, from Lady Laud to Sir Francis, dated on the same day on which she died.

Several letters addressed to Lady Laud, written by Sir Francis, lay also on the desk; I read the first words of the open letter, they were "E'er you receive this the obstacle to your marriage with Lady Blanche will be a thing of nought." The words recalled me to myself; they were never written for my eye; and gathering up the whole I placed them in the grate where a bright fire had been lit to air the room.

In the same desk were a pair of boy's gloves half worn, a well thumbed copy of Robinson Crusoe, on the title page of which was written in a boy's hand, Charles Geoffrey Laud; and in a compartment away by itself a small parcel wrapped with silk paper containing a curl of short hair much like Godfrey's. Inside were written those significant words: "my darling's hair."

These fearful letters stinging like the adder; the old gloves carefully treasured; the curl of shining hair; the worst and best feelings of our nature; blessing and cursing; Satan presenting himself among the children of God; one

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moment able to do and dare to the uttermost for those she loved, the next, alas! alas!

I called Mrs. Morrison toward me, and shewing the curl to her, asked whose hair it was.

"It is the Baron o' Brackley's," said she, with a deep sigh, taking the curl from its envelope, and turning it round her finger, "it was me who gave it to my lady after he was gone.

"It was a rule, that when the boys returned from school for the holidays, the hair-dresser came from the village to cut their hair, so that they might look their best when visiting with their mamma. I always superintended on these occasions, in case the barber might take off too much. I don't know what put it into my head then—I never thought of such a thing before, in all the many times their hair was cut—but I asked the Baron to have one of his curls cut for me which he did with his own hands, telling me that when he got his pocket money, previous to returning to school, he would buy me a gold locket to put it in.

"Woe is me," said she, after a pause of a second or two, "the useless old woman and the senseless curl are both here, but the brave boy with the kind heart, who was the hope of the house, and his grand lady-mother are both gone!"

I remarked that it was very like Godfrey's hair.

"So it is, my lady," was the reply, "and so is Godfrey like the Baron, and turning more like him every day, altho' he has his beautiful mother's eye and mouth. I used to think it was that likeness to Lady Roderick that made Lady Laud hate him so much. She never could abide him even when he was a baby; although she could command herself in his father's presence; but as he grew up and became so silly and helpless, I think she disliked him more and more; still I must do her

justice, she did try in many ways to be kind to him, yet it was easy to see it was against the grain. I have heard her say many a time : 'I wish to God, Morrison, that poor idiot was in his grave.'

"Lady Laud was my mistress; I was the servant of her house before she was born, and it was my duty to serve her, and I did my best to obey her behests for many a long day, serving her, alas! for many years better than I served my God, and till the last day of her life I obeyed her commands as I never obeyed the command of another; not even Lady Hugh, her mother-in-law, did I obey like her. Lady Robert was so beautiful and grand, so like a queen, the same in her trouble as she was in her youth and beauty, that it was our pride and pleasure to serve her; but I could not hate Godfrey even to please her. God alone can tell how it was, perhaps he put it in my heart, but the more my lady hated him the better I liked him, and the more I tried to recover him from his sore sickness.

"I was not the only one in the house who knew her ladyship hated Godfrey; Joseph knew it as well as I did; although she would never have spoken to the like of him about anything but his work; she was too proud for that; how he knew, it is not easy to say, but I had often to check him for the rude way he spoke of her ladyship's dislike to Godfrey; and Joseph likes Godfrey as well as I do. Many a cold winter night I heard him praying to the Heavenly Father to make him fit to inherit his father's land; and I think his prayers have been heard, at least, in a measure."

"I am sure they have both been heard and answered," said I, "Godfrey is as wise as any one in the house, and I mean to show him to the tenantry on Christmas day as their future and rightful lord."

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Mrs. Morrison's face presented a strange mixture of doubt and pleasure in its expression as she said, looking up in my face, as if she would read there a confirmation of my words : "Are you indeed, my lady, and what is Mr. Philip to get?"

"Do you mean what land is he to get?"

"Yes, my lady."

"He is to get what he has a good title to, what he was born heir to, and what I trust no one will be able to deprive him of: his head and his hands. He has no title to be knight of Harford Yettes, he never had any real right to be called heir as he was; nor do I think it would do him much good; what has it done for those who one after the other usurped Godfrey's right to both land and title? One by one they have laid themselves down in their graves, while Godfrey has lived to become strong and wise, and will ultimately I trust inherit his title and land, perhaps to be the best Baron that Harford Yettes has ever seen."

"God grant it may be so;" replied the old woman, speaking as if she was thinking aloud, and rubbing the shining curl which she still held in her hand; "but it looks an unlikely like thing that a poor boy like Godfrey who has been crushed under the hand of both God and man, for twelve years, would ever have energy or sense enough to guide himself, far less to care for a property like Harford Yettes and keep up the dignity of such a family."

"If he improves as much during the next three years as he has done during the past sixteen months," returned I, "he will be able to perform all his duties as a landlord, and to take his place as the head of the family; better in many ways than Sir Francis would ever have done, or did when he was in possession of both land and title."

“Sir Francis was always gay and stirring, and needed more money than the estate could afford, impoverished as it was by the long time Sir Roderick lived abroad, but he was a handsome man and a learned gentleman, as all his forefather’s were before him.”

The housekeeper spoke these words in a demure grave tone and with an air of offended dignity; she could not bear even an implied reproach on a Laud, unless, indeed, it were uttered by herself.

She still kept the curl in her hand as if unwilling to part with it; and seeing this I asked if she would like to retain it; if so, she had my permission to do so.

“Oh, my lady,” she replied quickly and with a gratified air, “I would never have parted with it except to his Lady mother in her sorrow, and since you are so good as to give it to me again, I will get the finest gold locket that can be bought to keep it in; if it was distilled gold it’s not too good to keep his hair,”—and she kissed the curl as she spoke.

“As the Baron promised to give you a locket for his hair, you must allow me to buy it, and present it to you in his name; as his sister-in-law I have a right to do this for him.”

The old woman looked the thanks she could not speak, and hurried off to seek the solitude of her own room that she might give vent to the pent-up feeling which the sight of her young master’s hair had called forth.

Opposite to where Lady Laud must have sat when using her desk, were hung two pictures of the Baron, one in a group with his two brothers, the other represented him playing with a favourite dog; and a handsome Baron he was; looking on his pictured face I did not wonder at the love borne him by all; courage, generosity, and benevolence were each portrayed there as distinctly as the handsome features through which they shone.

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CHAPTER XI.

O that we could be true
To friend and foe, as falls on flower and weed
Alike the morning dew!

I PUT the preparations for our Christmas feast into the hands of Mrs. Morrison and Joseph, with instructions that all was to be done as in former years, and in addition I was to have a Christmas tree, which Joseph was to procure from Ley Grange, a distance of twenty miles, we having too few young trees at Harford Yettes to afford cutting one for the occasion.

My grandfather had often amused and instructed me by giving long descriptions of the Christmas festivities to which he had been a witness on the German banks of the Rhine; and I determined to inaugurate Godfrey's first introduction to those who, I hoped, would yet be his tenantry, by some thing they had never seen, and which by being the particular property of the children, would, of a consequence, be duly appreciated by the parents.

I wrote to Mrs. Howard describing my Christmas tree, and giving her a list of what occurred to myself as most suitable for its adornment, and most likely to be acceptable to the recipients, giving her a *carte-blanche* to send me whatever else she might find worthy of a place on my tree.

Mrs. Howard made a good selection, and all arrived safely at Harford Yettes. Mrs. Morrison's plum-pudding and Christmas cakes were, in their dimensions something like small wash-tubs, and Joseph saw that of roast-beef and pork, pies there were enough and to spare. The evening previous

as a matter of course, we had the tree nailed to the hall floor; and some hours before we expected our guests, Mrs. Mordant, (a widowed daughter of Lady Rawdon's), her two children, Godfrey and I proceeded to adorn it. Spinning-tops, guns, grapes, oranges, mimic drums, dolls, gayly coloured nets filled with candies, were hung up on every available point, lighted up and shewn to advantage by hundreds of Chinese lanterns of suitable proportions to the tree, now glittering in scarlet and gold.

Snow had fallen unremittingly the whole day, and towards evening the wind became loud and blustering, until by four o'clock, when our guests were expected to arrive, both earth and sky presented the appearance of a perfect hurricane.

Many a time and oft, Godfrey and I went to the hall door, in hopes to see that the storm had abated, each time being driven back by a shower of snow, which the blast without threw over our heads, and sent far back after us into the hall. I think I felt nearly as anxious for the arrival of our guests as Godfrey did; and he poor fellow was about as impatient as a boy of seventeen usually is, who expects to be the centre of attraction for the evening.

Lady Rawdon declared a hundred times that the tenants would not venture out in such a night. "They had," she said, "been so long unaccustomed to spend their Christmas at the hall, that they had formed other plans for their amusement, which had now become a habit. Many of the younger members of the farm-houses had never been at the hall, hence in such a night there was not the least chance of their coming."

The old clock which had told the hour for the arrival and dispersion of so many merry Christmas parties, warned four, and not one of the nearest tenantry were in sight. In former

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years the clock warned four to a well-filled hall. The hand was fast approaching the hour; tick, tick, nearer and nearer it came. The pendulum with its great brass sun swinging backwards and forwards in sulky majesty, indignant that the lighted hall should remain empty. Bang, bang, went the hammer; one, two, three, four! After all our trouble it was too bad; no one to thank us for the pains we had taken or share in the good things we had prepared.

With the last stroke of the hammer came Mrs. Morrison, Joseph, the farm lads, and Hannah, in full dress,—Mrs. Morrison's lace cap and silk gown looking as prim as the muslin cap and worsted gown of her every-day wear, while Joseph evidently felt quite grand and important in his white vest and blue coat with shining brass buttons as large as half-pence.

"I fear we will have no guests to-night," said I, addressing Mrs. Morrison as they entered, and according to custom seated themselves on either side of the door, that they might receive and conduct the visitors as they arrived to the upper end of the hall; "and so we must have a 'holiday which we ourselves shall make.'"

"We will have plenty of guests, my lady," replied she; "there is no fear of that. The storm has made the roads heavy and kept them back, but they will be here every one of them. I knew they would be late, or Joseph and I would have been here half-an-hour since."

Just as she spoke, a sound of many wheels, a loud bang on the old brass knocker, accompanied by shouts of laughter, were heard above the whistling wind and pelting storm, and in one gush, fourteen or fifteen men, women and children entered the hall, talking, laughing, stamping and shaking off the snow which covered their outer garments, each face

radiant with health and pleasure ; the wind and snow which made us shake and shiver inside the house, having infused new vigor into their veins, as the reward of struggling with its fierceness.

Mrs. Morrison received the guests with much cordial goodwill and heartiness, which the farmers and their wives returned with interest, the servants bearing off the wet overcoats and cloaks as they were taken from their respective wearers.

All these preliminaries having been gone through, they all came *en masse* to the top of the hall, and were there presented to Godfrey as the future heir of Harford Yettes. Some of the old men shook hands with him, while others contented themselves with bowing and "wishing him joy," but all, men and women, stared with unfeigned surprise.

Ere the ceremony was gone through with the first, another and another lot of guests arrived, all in the same high spirits as the first, given them as much by the fierce north wind as by the festive occasion.

Among the first comers were a farmer and his wife who rented one of the poorest farms far out on the edge of a lone moor. They had two children, a boy and a girl, both above sixteen years of age. All four, parents and children, were scrupulously neat and clean, but alas ! the holiday attire of the latter was sadly patched, the girl's dress being covered in part by a white apron.

I said a few words to Miss Young, and signing for the boy and girl to follow her, they left the hall, returning in a few minutes with pleased faces, the one clothed in a suit of Godfrey's clothes, the other in a dress of my own with a bright ribbon in her hair. The mother could scarce restrain herself when she witnessed the metamorphosis effected in the appearance of

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her children, while every now and then she bestowed sundry nudges with her elbow upon the father, that he might observe some new beauty in the clothes or grace in the children which had just revealed itself to her own eyes.

We had few Lauds with us, the bad weather having detained those who had fine dinners of their own. Only Mr. Hugh Laud of Langley Dale, his lady and two sons, who fortunately arrived the previous evening. As we would have made but a small party in the great dining-room we all agreed by full consent to have our dinner at the upper end of the hall table, Godfrey, as master, taking the seat at the head of the table, Mr. Hugh Laud at the bottom, as it used to be in the old time, when tenant and master were placed on a more equal and more friendly footing than they are now.

It would be well for us in Canada if we would set ourselves to emulate, in our various relations as landlord and tenant, employer and employed, what many of us have seen and been actors in, in our home beyond the sea. In no country in the world is there such familiar intercourse between rich and poor as in the Scottish Highlands. It is a great fallacy to suppose that the chiefs or their families, in nearly all of whose veins run royal blood, are cold and distant to the people by whom they are surrounded, whether these are tenant farmers, factors, foresters, or game-keepers on their estates, or the men and women comprising the servants of their household, the very reverse is the case. High and low, rich and poor, know all about one another and take a deep and lively interest in each other's joys and sorrows. I would not wish it to be understood that I confine these observations to the heads of clans and their people, by no means; this familiarity with, and

kindly interest in those around them, is equally characteristic of those comprising the employers and employed in the large establishments pervading the length and breadth of the land ; and hence no people are so well mannered, so frank and familiar, yet respectful ; so affectionate, yet so polite and deferential to their superiors. The superior, whether he be laird or employer is familiarly acquainted with his people, and converses with them as man with man, shaking hands, for instance, heartily and cordially after a short absence, each making minute enquiries into the well-being of the other's family, the utmost courtesy and kindness is thus always shewn to the poorest, and a respect for those who are *respectable* is universal, a respect never surpassed, perhaps unequalled in any other land on earth, and this in a land proverbial for its pride of birth, so much so, that pride and poverty is by our wealthier English neighbours held to be synonymous with the name of Scotchmen.

In Canada, with but very few honourable exceptions ; if we turn to the numerous class of employers and employed we too frequently find insubordination, oppression, haughtiness, discontent, mutual dislike or mutual indifference, and mutual ignorance of each other's private affairs, existing between those who are dependent on each other (the master as much as the man) almost for daily bread, and who in spite of the momentary difference of place are in reality bone of the same bone, flesh of the same flesh, this state of things being less excusable from the fact that in this land of our adoption the master of to-day is merely the servant of yesterday, in many cases the employée being a man of far greater erudition and incomparably higher talent than his master. If we advance a little further in so called social life as it is with us, we find

between those not thus dependant on each other, distinctions and shades of difference, which, if pointed out to the British aristocracy would seem to them pretty much like the indignation of Uncle Rat when Master Frog had the daring assurance to come a wooing to Miss Mouse, and must appear strange indeed to the listening and on-looking dignities of Heaven. If the various "circles" of Canada, had each a separate solar system of its own, instead of a common brotherhood, there could not be a more complete isolation than exists between the sets and classes in this our (Christian?) land. This is a serious question for each one among us to ask ourselves: Are we obeying the precepts of Him who has left us the express command: "Have no respect of persons."

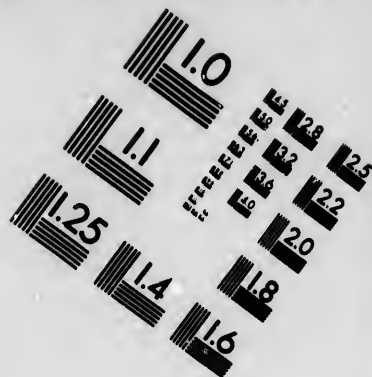
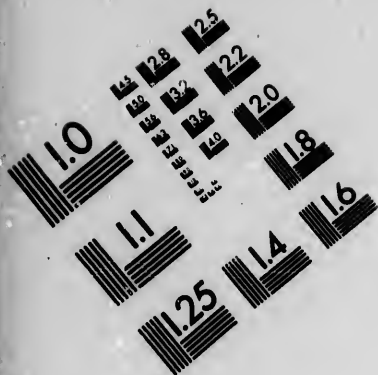
After dinner the young knight's health was drunk, in large quaffs of sweet cider, by old and young. Lady Rawdon asked Godfrey whether he would himself reply or if he would prefer Mr. Hugh Laud's doing so.

Without returning an answer to the question, Godfrey, to the surprise of us all, stood up as bold as a lion, saying in a clear voice: "I thank you all for coming to dine with me, and for drinking my health, and if I live to be your landlord, I will do my best to be a good one."

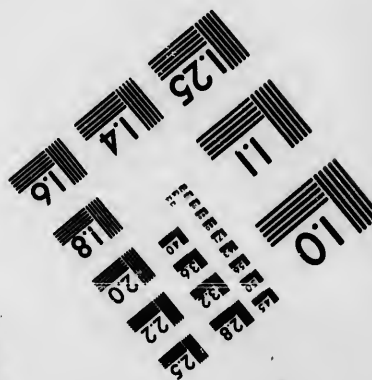
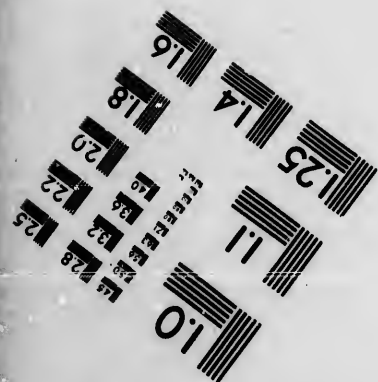
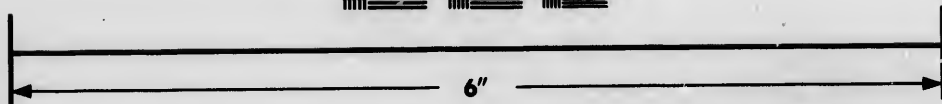
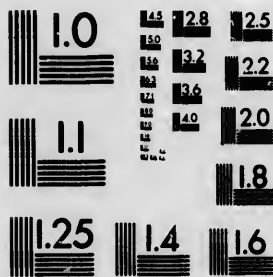
Shouts of applause filled the old hall, while Godfrey sat down again with the same self-possession he had left his seat.

Mrs. Morrison sobbed aloud, while Joseph's joy was expressed, evidently much against his will, by sundry blowings of his nose, after which he looked round and informed the company that he had caught cold while standing at the open door admitting them; and then, in order to show that he only spoke the truth and that he was too sensible to give vent





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to his feelings, he turned fiercely round to Mrs. Morrison, who sat by him, and asked, "Why she made a fool of herself; was this the first time she heard a Baron of Harford Yettes speak to his people?"

Lady Rawdon was a good woman, and I think rejoiced sincerely in Godfrey's recovery to health, but he stood now in the place which her sister's sons had each filled in his turn, and she had not magnanimity enough to rejoice in the prospect of his being knight. Her face had worn a discontented air since the day of her sister's death.

When roast beef and plum-pudding were at a discount, apples, nuts, &c., supplied their place for a time, and then the cloth was removed, the table taken to pieces, and dancing commenced, Godfrey choosing for his partner Isabella Mordant, the elder of Lady Rawdon's grand-children.

Country dances, cotillions and Sir Roger de Coverly, each had their turn, until all, young and old, manifested symptoms of unmistakable fatigue, and then Godfrey proceeded to distribute the gifts from the tree, to the infinite delight of the country folks, to whom it seemed like a tree brought from fairyland.

When its precious load was gone, Joseph cut off the lower branches to make room for two low seats covered with scarlet damask borrowed from the drawing-room. Godfrey was then desired to choose his queen and with her take possession of the thrones. As I suspected, Isabella Mordant was chosen queen, and a pretty queen the young lady made with her raven curls and soft brown eyes, the no less beautiful that she evidently appreciated the attentions of the handsome king by her side.

Dancing was again resumed and Godfrey was told to choose a partner from the tenantry, and to change the fair one as

often as possible, which the boy did with as much grace and absence of *mauvaise honte* as if he had been accustomed to dancing in more courtly circles all his life; perhaps it was his very simplicity which accounted for his non-embarrassment. It is, generally speaking, the very efforts we make to appear more graceful and accomplished than we really are, that causes us to become awkward and ridiculous. Were we to give ourselves no trouble about where we are to place and what we are to do with our hands and feet, in order to be at our ease, these often troublesome appendages would find use for themselves without our thinking at all on the subject, and our motions instead of being constrained and stiff would be natural, and of course graceful.

The storm continued to rage unremittingly, howling around the old house as if it had found therein a focus for venting its rage, each fresh blast of the tempest roaring with redoubled fury; however, there was mirth and warmth inside, and we heeded it not. True, some of the old people would once in a while ask each other how they were to get home, but the young ones heard neither wind nor storm; if they did it passed by unregarded. A new country dance had just been formed, and Godfrey had just taken for his partner Jenny Smith, the maiden whose dress was changed in the beginning of the evening, the damsel seeming to appreciate to its fullest extent the dignity of dancing with the young knight, when suddenly the door was burst open from without, and a man with a peaked fur cap and many caped overcoat entered, amid a gust of driving snow and cold wind which sent those nearest the door to the middle of the hall for shelter.

The stranger strode into the hall as if quite at home, shaking the snow from his capacious capes, and stamping as if to restore energy to his cramped limbs. "Go on with the

dance," said he in a hearty tone ; " I'll find a partner and be with you in a trice. Joseph, old boy," continued he. " where are you ? Make some one see to my horse. He has come twenty miles since four o'clock, and hard work it has been all the way, but down here at the hall it beats all. The spirit of the wind has surely come to keep his Christmas with our old Snatch Spirit, and like them, they are fighting so it takes the breath from a body to pass them."

By the time he had done speaking, Joseph, Mrs. Morrison, and several of the tenants had crowded round him to aid in disencumbering him of his heavy coat, fur cap, &c. He spoke to all, called each by their names, shaking hands heartily with Mrs. Morrison, but no one recognized him. The stranger burst into a hearty laugh. " What, no one knows me ? Why I have the advantage of you all. I can say I am one of the princes of the blood-royal, and you are bound to believe me. John Watson give me a shake of your hand, many a time I made your great pear-tree pay toll, and old Ben Smith, and Mrs. Brown, who used to make curds and cream for us every year at partridge shooting."

He shook hands with these and many more calling all by name, but no one recognised the tall dark man whose eyes flashed mirth, and whose stirring laugh rang among them.

He was all the while making his way to the top of the room where Lady Rawdon sat, whom he singled out, and offering her his hand, he said : " One Laud will know another, Lady Rawdon knows who I am."

Lady Rawdon thus addressed gave her hand, but gazed in utter amazement totally at a loss as to whom she looked on.

" Well," said he, mimicing a distressed tone, " as there's no one to welcome poor Arthur Laud he had better go back to

Ley Grange, and if there's no welcome there for him, better off to fair India again."

"Arthur Laud of Ley Grange?" exclaimed at least twenty voices at once, while Lady Rawdon, Mrs. Mordant, and Mr. and Mrs. Hugh Laud pressed forward to welcome him. He shook hands with all, and still looking round, as if searching for some one, exclaimed :

"Where is Lady Laud? she'll know me I'll warrant." Ere his question was answered, his eye fell on Godfrey, who stood gazing on the stranger in pleased wonderment as all the young people did.

"Ha! the Baron o' Brackley," said he grasping Godfrey's hand, "you're not so much changed as cousin Arthur, you're just the same jolly Charlie as ever, but where's your mama? where is Constance?" repeated he again addressing Lady Rawdon. She did not reply at once, but shook as if she had an ague fit, her face the while pale as ashes. I took her hand and gently making her sit down, said to the stranger :

"Death has been busy with your family in your absence."

Mr. Hugh Laud then took him to one side and spoke for several minutes in a low tone; the other replied, but in a voice equally subdued, the last words only of what he said were audible :

"Constance gone, the best and most beautiful; Harford Yettes is nothing to me without her, she who was the light and sun here as everywhere, all others moving around her."

Lady Rawdon, who had now partly recovered her composure, heard the last sentence and rejoined :

"God knows it is too true our best and beautiful, all, all gone, nothing left but desolation and mourning and woe."

Mrs. Mordant now seemed to recollect that he could know

nothing of Godfrey, or me either, and introduced me as Lady Laud, widow of Sir Francis, and Godfrey as Sir Roderick's son. The stranger bowed with the air of a gentleman to both introductions, and then seated himself by Lady Rawdon, endeavouring to draw her into conversation but in vain. I half suspected the whole evening our gaiety was to her painful in the extreme, and now the arrival of Mr. Arthur Laud and the scene which ensued had quite unhinged her. The stranger, whose appearance among us had caused such different sensations of joy, and sorrowful recollections, was a distant cousin of Lady Rawdon, but having become an orphan and proprietor of Ley Grange at an early age, his time was chiefly spent at Harford Yettes, where he had known Lady Laud as both girl and wife, hence his calling her by her Christian name of Constance, a liberty he never took with Lady Rawdon (although the younger of the two sisters), she having been married when he was a child

He had left Ley Grange fourteen years before, leasing it during his absence, and had allowed his rents to accumulate in the hands of his agent; meantime he had been in India, in the company's service for the first twelve years of his absence, the last two were spent in Italy and Germany. When he left home he told his friends he would not write but come back to surprise them all, when he tired of his self-imposed exile; he was aware of the deaths of Sir Roderick and Sir Robert from the public prints, but of no other. His coming had indeed been a surprise, as he promised it would; but it was a painful meeting for himself and for those who remained to welcome him.

Soon after the arrival of her cousin, Lady Rawdon begged of us to allow her to retire; the room she said was full of shadows, ever coming between her and the dancers, that while

she spoke, she could see them all, Roderick, and Robert, Constance and her children, as clearly as she saw the farmers and their wives.

Mrs. Mordant and I accompanied her to her room, but she would allow neither of us to remain, bidding us good-night and bolting the door as we went out.

On returning to the hall we found the mirth unabated and Mr. Arthur Laud going from one to another of the old farmers and their wives renewing his acquaintance with the friends of his early days. He had come home, he said, to reside permanently at Ley Grange, and make up to his tenantry by the good times he hoped to bring them, for anything they might have suffered in his absence.

He was to hold high holiday on New Year's eve, and he invited all now present, farmer and squire, the old whom he knew, and the young whom he would like to know, to come and partake of the cheer he would make. All promised readily and cordially to be at Ley Grange on New Year's day at four o'clock. The old clock warned ten, and this brought supper, hands shaking and farewells. Ere another hour had passed all our guests, with the exception of the Lauds, were on their way to their own homes.

Before we separated for the night, the Lauds assembled for supper in the little drawing-room, Mr. Arthur Laud making himself the centre of attraction to all. I have seldom known any one who had the same talent of attracting the love of those around them as the handsome owner of Ley Grange; grave, and yet gay, without an effort he won golden opinions from all.

Before we bade each other good-night, Louisa Mordant called our attention to the selfishness of Isabella, her elder sister, who, she complained, would not give her a box of candies,

although she (Louisa) was so much younger and liked them so much better than her sister, while poor Isabella unconsciously drew smiles from us all by declaring she would never part with the box because it was Godfrey's gift, but keep it all her life long in memory of the happiest day she had ever spent, and call it her happy box.

CHAPTER XII.

*How my spirit vainly flutters like a bird that beats the bars
To be gone beyond the sunset, and the day's revolving zone
Out into the primal darkness, and the world of the unknown.*

AT breakfast next morning the conversation almost at once turned upon Lady Laud, Lady Rawdon, and Mr. Arthur Laud talking of her as if she had been one of the most perfect beings in mind and body our poor earth had ever known. Her picture hung in the breakfast room and Mr. Laud said he would have it copied, and it should occupy the most honored place in Ley Grange.

He directed our attention to the likeness between Lady Laud and another lady of the house whose picture hung there, dressed in the stiff ruff of Elizabeth's time.

"I used to teaze Constance," said he, "about her resemblance to Lady Mable, and she in turn would threaten when she had turned her fiftieth year, to adopt Lady Mable's staff, and one use she was to make of it was for my especial benefit."

"How strange!" replied Lady Rawdon, "she was nearly that age when we lost the Baron, for three months she never quitted her bed, and when at last she tried to walk about, we found she could not stand without support, some days after she asked for Lady Mable's staff, and from that time she never moved without it."

"Where is it?" asked Mr. Laud, "it used to hang in the dining room under the picture of Lady Mable taken in advanced life."

"It is not there now," replied I, answering for Lady Rawdon, who I was sure knew nothing of the fate of the staff.

"No," said her ladyship, with an inquisitive anxious look as if the staff had been a thing of life, "where is it? I am sure I saw it there on the day of my dear sister's funeral."

"It was there then," I replied; "but subsequently it fell on Godfrey, and frightened him so that it occasioned his having the only bad fit he has taken since Lady Laud's death, I therefore considered it expedient to have it destroyed in the boy's presence, and to make him aid in doing so."

Whether it was the loss of this relic of the past, or my unthinking allusion to Godfrey's fits having ceased since Lady Laud's death, a thing she deprecated on a former occasion, I know not: most likely the latter, as her ladyship was no antiquarian in her tastes; but at all events some part of my speech had given dire offence; her eye flashed with a most unwonted fire, and her usually gentle voice asked in sharp accents:

"Is it possible that you could have consented to destroy a thing which has been venerated in our family for ages and which for ten years was scarcely ever out of my dear sister's hands in her waking hours; and this to indulge the whim of an idiot?"

"He is no idiot," replied I; striving to speak as calmly as possible; "and it was to prevent the risk of his becoming so that I had the senseless piece of wood destroyed."

"He has been declared an idiot by the laws of the land," replied Lady Rawdon, her whole frame trembling with emotion; her voice loud and her manner betraying passion I had deemed her incapable of allowing herself to give way to, "and hence," continued she, "his name and heritage have passed

from him to the son and grandson of her whose property you have so wantonly destroyed to save yourself the pain of listening to the whinings of a fool; her grandson, your own child, whom I must say you are most unnaturally endeavouring to deprive of his birthright."

Godfrey had been an unthought-of listener to all that passed, and without giving me time to reply, came forward from the window seat to which he had retired to read after breakfast, and standing exactly in front of where Lady Rawdon sat, said with blazing eye and heightened colour:

"I am no fool, the laws of my country may take my land and my title, but they cannot make me a fool."

"Your actions belie your words, my poor boy," interrupted her ladyship, still trembling with passion; "it is a notorious fact that no fool ever thought himself one, the men who declared you to be an idiot were the highest authority in the land, and had no interest in saying so if it were not the truth; a great boy of seventeen with wits like other people, would not be likely to fall in a fit because a staff fell on his shoulder."

"Sir Philip," continued she, turning to the child, who was a wondering listener to the whole of this extraordinary conversation, and whom she wished most earnestly to be the knight, because he was her sister's grandson, "would you fall in a fit, or even cry, if the picture of old Sir Hugh, your grandfather, fell on your head?"

"No," said Philip with great readiness, on being thus appealed to, looking up at the same time with a defiant air at the picture of the good humoured jolly-looking knight as he spoke.

"No," replied Godfrey in a slow measured tone, and an assumed calmness which betrayed deeper passion than Lady

Rawdon's violence did. "No, were the picture to fall upon Philip it would do no more than startle him for a moment; but it was altogether different with me, I was a poor crushed thing, used more like a dog than a human being. In my father's house I was only allowed a closet without light or air to sleep in, and a maniac's dress for clothing; while he has never known an unkind word, or an ill-cared-for day; and the very staff which caused me again to take a fit similar to those which I was dosed into for years, was one used as a rod, by the most wicked woman who ever lived, to beat my poor flesh to a jelly every time she found me alone, until at last, no power could persuade me to enter her chamber, and the only way in which she could tempt me to take her dosed fruit was to throw it from a window where I was sure her blows could not reach me; and why was I beat and dosed? not because of any evil I had done, but that I stood between her son and my own father's land and title."

Every one in the room seemed transfixed with astonishment by Godfrey's speech and the revelations he had made; as for myself I shook with fear; not of the effect his words would have on Lady Rawdon, but lest the fierce passion which he seemed unable to control, so different from his naturally quiet and yielding disposition, would so act on his nervous system as to undo all the good that had hitherto been accomplished. His lips quivered, his nostrils distended, and his breast heaved as if the next moment he would fall in a fit. Laying my hand on his arm I drew him from the room, ere his astounded antagonist had power to reply, and leading him by the back-door into the garden, I kept him there until we were joined by Mr. Hutton, who had been a listener to the latter part of Godfrey's speech, and on whose judgment I could rely for soothing the wounded feelings of the angry boy.

As I re-entered the parlour on my return, Lady Rawdon turned towards me and asked in a surprised although subdued tone, as if she feared my giving a confirmation of Godfrey's words:

"Who in the world could have been wicked enough to put such horrible thoughts into the boy's head? Would Morrison have dared?"

"No," replied I; "Mrs. Morrison is entirely ignorant of such a thing ever having been surmised; but Godfrey was present on both occasions when I shewed the medicine to the physician who came to prescribe for him, and I observed that his words were noted, and had an effect on the boy.

"I did not mention to you, nor indeed to any one, what the doctor said, but his opinion was that there had been great negligence, if not culpability, in administering such a medicine. that it was sufficient of itself to produce the fits from which Godfrey suffered. He spoke very strongly on the subject, saying that the man who had done so had made himself amenable to the laws of his country thereby. Godfrey's idea of the fruit given him being dosed, was most likely drawn from the great anxiety manifested on all occasions by the housekeeper to prevent his eating fruit."

Lady Rawdon made no reply; but Mrs. Mordant, addressing her mother, said:

"It is a most extraordinary circumstance that there should have been any mistake about the medicine; as you remember, mama, aunt Constance took Godfrey to Edinburgh twice to consult the physicians there on his case."

No reply from Lady Rawdon, who seemed to be wrapped in thought of no very agreeable nature, doubt and unwilling conviction striving for the mastery; once she closed her eyes and pressed her lips firmly together as if in agony of soul,

while her cheek became pale as ashes. Was she thinking of Charlie's terrible death? Did she know now the secret of her house so long hidden?

For some time no one spoke; at last Mr. Laud, rising from his seat as if he wished by moving to put an end to this painful silence, more painful than even the conversation which preceded it, stood in front of the fire, leaning against the mantel-piece so as to face us all, said:

"Whether the young man needed medicine to make him wise in his childhood it is difficult now to say, but he is no fool at present that is clear. Why, the speech he made just now, had a degree of good reasoning in it which would plead his cause better than any lawyer in the land; however, we will now dismiss this subject, and enter upon one more pleasant to us all.

'I came twenty miles unbidden, through the 'wind and frost and snow' to keep Christmas with you all at Harford Yettes, and in return for my courtesy and to show your appreciation of my efforts to amuse and delight you all, I expect and require every one here present, and their families, to aid me in holding high revelry at Ley Grange on the merry New Year's tide.'

The two young Mordants, who were now in the room, gave an exclamation of delight in answer to the proposition; while all else tendered a ready assent.

Soon after, Lady Rawdon and Mr. Arthur Laud took their departure together, the former being hurried off by the intelligence that her son, Sir John Rawdon, his lady, two daughters and son, had unexpectedly arrived at Saltoun in her absence.

Mr. Hugh Laud and his family had left us after a hurried breakfast, and in time to escape the scene between Lady Rawdon and Godfrey. This was fortunate; the old man and

his better half dearly loved a little gossip ; had they been present, Godfrey's accusation of Lady Laud and the consequent disclosure which it forced from me, would have soon been the subject of wonder and comment in every house for twenty miles round. In talking over this with Mrs. Mordant she told me he was known by the name of Paul Pry by strangers as well as Lauds.

Poor, fat, old man, I fear he deserved the name. On the day of Lady Laud's funeral he nearly lost his balance in endeavouring to see all that could be seen from the trap in the tower, and but for the opportune arrival and assistance of Joseph would have realized for himself but too truly how her ladyship and Sir Francis met their death ; and on his Christmas visit it was with difficulty he was prevented from entering every nook and closet in the old house.

Every day between Christmas and New-Year we had a visit from Mr. Laud, and a very welcome guest he was to all ; he used to ride over from Ley Grange, take a late breakfast with us, chat for an hour or two, and then off again to superintend the preparations for our amusement. On the occasion of his last two visits he came carrying a huge bouquet of hot-house flowers enveloped in several folds of paper to protect the delicate blossoms from the cold ; these flowers were not presented to any one in particular, but placed on the table with an encomium on his own goodness in bringing them so far. We all took care of the flowers ; they were very welcome, but scarcely so much so as the handsome dark man, who with them, brought stirring words, and droll stories, which he told without a smile on his own face, and yet contrived to set his hearers into fits of laughter, infusing new life into us, making us watch his lessening figure as he disappeared in the distance, and wish the morrow was come, so that it might bring with it Arthur Laud.

The arrangements at Ley Grange were differently conducted from ours at Harford Yettes ; the Lauds were not to arrive until six o'clock ; by this time Mr. Laud would have received the tenantry, replied to all the kind speeches they held themselves called on to make, and set them a dancing before our arrival, thus enabling him to bestow due attention on all.

At six o'clock on New-Year's eve we were driving up the avenue of Ley Grange ; the night was very dark, but the trees on either side of the avenue were lit up with thousands of coloured lanterns, swaying to and fro on the dark pine branches, which, together with the mountain-ash, still covered with rich clusters of scarlet berries, gave back their green and red tints to the light as it fell among them, making the place look like fairyland.

The house was an irregular-looking building, built in the Elizabethan style, smaller and more modern than Harford Yettes, but infinitely handsomer, and as we saw it then, gay as lights and ever-greens could make it, every window being lit up and festooned with wreaths of ivy and holly, the latter bright with its red berries, it looked like some sylvan palace. Ley Grange was as well wooded as Harford Yettes and Saltoun were destitute of such natural embellishments, the house being built in a low valley surrounded by grand old woods embowering it in every direction, and spreading as far as the eye could reach. The appointments in the dining and drawing rooms were on a scale of magnificence far superior to any thing I had ever seen ; the side-board and buffet were covered with gold and silver plate, the walls hung with pictures of exquisite beauty, and mirrors reflecting them again reaching from floor to ceiling.

The belles of the evening were the young ladies Rawdon, both very handsome and highly conscious of being so, and

withal not only inclined to look down on the other guests as those who knew nothing of continental life, but also to show by their looks, and even by their words, that they did so.

On entering the outer drawing-room we found both the young ladies standing in front of a large mirror, which reached from the floor to the ceiling, occupied in examining the flowers composing a huge bouquet that towered above their heads; they were dressed alike, in silver muslin, and both girls and flowers looked "beautiful exceedingly." Turning round as we entered, they cried out almost simultaneously:

"Oh! Aunt Mordant, how old looking you have grown. Is she not, Arthur?" (to Mr. Laud.) The gentleman thus appealed to gave them both a queer look as if he would have said, "How impudent you are," and "Aunt Mordant's" usually pale face looked young and handsome, embellished with the crimson blush their impertinent remark had called forth.

Lady Rawdon looked quite grand in green velvet and amethyst, while the fat mama of the two belles outshone all others in crimson satin, point lace and brilliants.

There were many other ladies old and young, the party at Ley Grange not being confined to the Lauds, and the handsome proprietor was courted and flattered by all, to what might be his heart's content, if he was fond of such adulation. The Misses Rawdon were both very young, both under twenty, and the youngest chose to be thought child-like, and under this guise romped and took liberties which her graver sister, who set up for a blue, considered, as she expressed it, "very preposterous and ridiculous."

Part of this childish innocence and simplicity consisted in clasping both hands on "cousin Arthur's" arm, and occasionally as it pleased her to be in a pensive mood, for a

minutes leaning her beautiful head with its wealth of dark brown curls until it almost touched his shoulder. This looked very much like as if she, Miss Mabel, knew who was to be the future mistress of Ley Grange. Its master seemed to bear this infliction with great good humour, if not with pleasure, yet at times it was just possible to discover a shade on the dark face, telling the sweet was too sweet.

The young ladies and Mr. Laud sung together, their voices clear and sweet, his rich and strong; they afterwards sung duets, Mr. Laud standing by the piano turning over the music for them; but being called away, and Miss Mabel observing his absence, she stopped short in the middle of her song, saying, she was tired and could sing no more. For me, the young ladies had evidently a great contempt; when introduced they curtsied with the utmost stiffness, and after indulging in a rude stare immediately turned away; such a slight from two young girls I neither knew nor cared for, ought not to have troubled me, but it did. Early in the evening I was seated on a low *fauteuil* almost behind the aforementioned high bouquet, examining a small cabinet of Italian cameos, when I heard my own name, and looking in the direction of the voice I saw Mr. Arthur Laud and his two cousins sitting on a *vis-à-vis* close by, his back and of course the faces of the young ladies turned towards me; they were within a few feet of where I sat, and Miss Mabel had her eyes fixed on the cabinet in my hand while her sister spoke.

“Cousin Francis was such a darling, so handsome, so amiable, and so romantic, just one who could be wheedled into a marriage with one who interested him, and never wait to consult his better judgment.”

“But was he wheedled into it?” asked her companion.
“Of course,” returned the young lady in a tone of almost

indignant surprise: "did you not know that? why it almost broke Aunt Constance's heart, it was such a death-blow to all her hopes; and latterly, her love was entirely centered in Francis; she had no one else to love, and he was all the fondest mother could wish."

"Indeed! I fancied somehow he was inclined to be wild and spent more of his time at the billiard table, while his money lasted, than in the privacy of his home."

"He was extravagant certainly; we have all our faults, but that was of no consequence; you are aware he could have married Lady Blanche Haringdale with her three hundred thousand pounds. It makes me shudder when I think of it, (and the young lady did shudder to show how much she was in earnest) to know that he lost Lady Blanche and in her stead married a governess."

"You are wrong there," said Mr. Laud; "Lady Francis is grand-daughter to General Fortesque, whom you may recollect we met in Florence."

"A daughter of General Fortesque!" exclaimed Mabel, raising her head from the recumbent attitude—almost touching her cousin's shoulder—she had been indulging in, and so wrapt in her own blissful anticipations that she only caught half the meaning of Mr. Laud's words. "Gracious! it could not be; we all knew she was a governess, and that was one reason why aunt Laud, and indeed he himself, poor fellow, when he came to his senses, wished to conceal the marriage."

"It is nevertheless a veritable truth, as your grandmother Rawdon will inform you," persisted Mr. Laud.

"It is of no consequence now," said Miss Augusta with a sigh, which she made very audible, placing her hand on her left side and closing her eyes as if the sigh or the feeling

which produced the sigh gave her pain. "No," replied she, "it is of no consequence whether she is the grand-daughter of a general, or a governess, she was the ruin of poor cousin Francis' prospects, and ultimately the cause of his death. You are aware how his death took place?"

"Yes, he fell through a concealed trap at the top of the old tower."

"Yes!" another sigh deeper than before, and a long pause, ere the young lady could finish the sentence; "yes, she was ill or fancied she was, and would not come to the drawing-room to welcome him on his arrival; he insisted upon going to see her in her room, and so both mother and son fell into that terrible place; the hinges of the trap were decayed! How sad," again sighed Miss Augusta, "that the valuable lives of Lady Laud and Sir Francis should have been sacrificed through such a person."

"The person, as you call her," returned Mr. Laud, speaking with some heat and gently withdrawing his shoulder from Miss Mabel's curls as he spoke, "is in my opinion one of the most beautiful and lady-like women I have met since my return to Europe, and her conduct towards Godfrey, noble and unselfish."

"Most eccentric and unnatural you mean," replied Miss Rawdon, speaking with more energy than grace, "grand-mama Rawdon says she is sure it would have killed Lady Laud had she known what was to happen after her death; poor dear Aunt Laud never anticipated that Harford Yettes would ever pass away from her family. It is well she is dead," continued she speaking with additional emphasis; "'the righteous are taken from the evil to come.'"

I was boiling with indignation; I could have no more restrained myself from speaking than I could have chained

the wind ; knowing as I did that both young ladies were aware I was listening to every word they said. I pushed my chair a little back so as to bring it in front of the couch where Mr. Laud and his cousins sat, and touching Miss Rawdon with my fan, to attract her attention, I said in as steady a voice as I could command :

“ Miss Rawdon has surely forgot that if Lady Laud is one of the righteous, she will rejoice in her far off home to behold Godfrey’s restoration to his reason, and the possession of his father’s title at the same time. Allow me also to disabuse your mind on another particular connected with myself, or rather my antecedents. I never was a governess. I never knew enough, to earn my bread in that way. I was a sewing girl, and yet strange to say the grandchild of a general, and, in right of my mother, the descendant of Lord Boldenham.”

Had the crystal chandelier under which they sat fallen on the head of Mr. Laud he could not have looked more thunder-struck ; Miss Mabel simpered and bit her lips, I think to prevent her from laughing, while her more dignified sister threw back her finely shaped head, and stared in my face with a cool composure, which said as plainly as spoken language ! “ I will not bandy words with such as thee.”

Mr. Laud released his arm from the clasped hands of Miss Mabel, rose and turning towards me, asked if I would allow him to shew me the picture of the Infant Jesus, which he had spoken of the day previous.

I took his offered arm, and accompanied him into one of the inner drawing-rooms, where the picture in question hung.

“ These cousins of mine are thoughtless and very young,” said he in an apologetic tone, “ and as I happen to be a favourite, and have not seen them since we parted in Florence

last winter, they seem to fancy it is incumbent on them to tell me all they have heard in the meantime, whether worth listening to or not, true or false."

"Have you not seen the Misses Rawdon since their arrival?" asked I, surprised into the question.

"How could I?" was the reply; "you know I have been as busy as a bee making my preparations; it was only by herculean exertions that I accomplished all this in time. Have I not succeeded to a marvel?"

"I should say you have, but in truth I have seen so little of the gay world that I am ill calculated to judge; I told the simple truth when I said a few minutes since that I was a sewing girl."

"What! you a sewing girl! how could that have been? how did it come about? Were you changed at nurse, and then in the approved style of such romances, your nurse repented on her death-bed and hurled her own child from General Fortesque's drawing-room, and metamorphosed you from a sewing girl, into a lady fair and bright."

"Nothing half so exciting; I was brought up by my paternal aunt, Mrs. Young, and have never known another name than Innes Dundas, the one I bore until I exchanged it for Laud."

"You are either playing with me, or your life must have been a wonderful romance, one of those truths which are stranger than fiction."

"All my life has been painful reality, no romance truly; unless to work hard and suffer, be romance."

Mr. Laud pressed his hand over his eyes for a second, and then as if anxious to change the not very agreeable subject we were conversing on, said, "You expect the General's return in the course of next month?"

"I do."

We stood in front of a bay window and Mr. Laud lifted the pink silk curtain by which it was shaded, that we might look out on the wooded lawn; and lo! in the window recess were snugly seated Isabella Mordant and Godfrey; they both stood bolt upright, looking as if inclined to jump from the window or anywhere else that might present itself as an egress to escape the confusion they felt. Isabella was the first to recover her self-possession.

"I was telling Godfrey the story of Sir Guy the Seeker," said she, speaking with a little hesitation.

"A very pretty story," replied I, turning from the window, and reassuring the young lady and her cousin by putting on as common-place a look as possible.

"I hope Godfrey and Isabella may be as good friends five or six years hence," said I, as we walked on leaving them still standing in the window recess, and evidently undecided whether under the circumstances it would be advisable to continue the story of Sir Guy the Seeker.

"Would you like to make a match there," asked my companion with a queer searching look.

"No," returned I; "very decidedly no; I have only been concerned in one match-making during my life, and that turned out so ill that it has been a solemn warning not to interfere in another."

"It is to be hoped that you *will* interfere with another, notwithstanding the solemn warning you talk of. You do not, surely, at your age, a widow before most women are married, mean to live a lonely, and comparatively joyless existence, because the marriage you made with the usual inexperience and rashness of a school-girl, believing, because the handsome form, or conversational powers of the man who presents

himself as a lover, has obtained an interest in her heart, that this is love, the love we ought to feel for one we intend to pass our lives with, never thinking it necessary to ascertain the guiding principle of soul, which alone is to make or mar our marriage happiness. Because a union formed on such a basis sinks with the sand it was built on, this is surely no reason, why a second, the result of mature judgment, should not be a happy one; nay, it is almost a guarantee that the choice you now make will be where you do not merely fancy you love, but where you really do so."

As he finished speaking he placed me on a seat in the conservatory into which we had strayed, and seating himself at the further end, so as to have his eyes bent on my face, seemed waiting my reply with a scrutiny which made me feel shy and awkward. I wished to change the subject, and plucking a rose from a plant within reach, I pressed back the leaves so as to open the blossom to its full extent, saying as I did so:

"Is it not strange, we feel almost an-affection for a beautiful flower with a sweet perfume, while we merely admire those lovely white and crimson fuschias, with their scentless blossoms."

"No, that illustrates exactly what I have been speaking of, we *admire* the outward attractions of person or flower; we can only truly love qualities more sterling; benevolence, truth, heroism, generosity; these are what excite the deeper feelings of love in our nature, and make us purer and better, because we naturally aspire to reach the standard of excellence in those we love. In talking of generosity, I do not mean that lavish display in spending our money, which is a popular virtue more cheaply purchased than any other; what I mean by generosity of soul, is the self sacrifice which makes a gen-

erous man recoil from declaring his love while his finances are low, or his position unascertained, lest he engage the affections which might otherwise have been bestowed on one more able than himself to shield the object of his love from the waves and storms of fate. This is the highest generosity of which our nature is capable; all honour to those who possess it; and they are not few in number, who have left home, and friends, and all the dear early associations connected with the familiar faces of their youth to toil for long years in burning India, that at length they may come home to lay the fruit of their lives at the feet of one whom they have bound by neither word nor tie; and who only knew by the language of the eye through which the soul speaketh, that for her sake he had left his own northern home; that in the hope of winning her in the far future, toil and loneliness were joyfully embraced."

He stopped, and taking the rose from my hand, which he bent over, and re-arranged as if he would restore their fresh beauty to the poor leaves I had crushed so wantonly, said in a low voice as if he almost feared being heard, "Yes, the rose is one of our dearest as well as our most lovely flowers, and I love it as I do all lovely things, love what I dare not name, lest my love might be deemed premature and hence impertinent."

The last words had scarcely died on his lips, ere he rose hastily, and giving me his arm we were the next moment out of the soft mild light and perfumed air of the conservatory, amid the dazzling glare of chandelier and gilded mirror in the crowded drawing-room.

The impertinent speeches of the Misses Rawdon, and afterwards this conversation with our host, made me feel ill at ease during the evening.

After I retired for the night, and put out my light, this feeling increased almost to pain; I could not sleep—I felt as if some great misfortune was about to overwhelm me; I rose, and going into the next room where Philip slept with his nurse, I carried him into my own bed lest the house should take fire in the night. I was oppressed with wild fancies, and unable to sleep; I lay watching the stars as they died out of the black sky one by one, and the grey dawn took their place.

I rose with the dawn, oppressed with a dread of I knew not what, which my reason was wholly unable to restrain; it was not my nature to indulge such nervous fancies against the watching of my better judgment; in general I was hopeful, and little inclined to look otherwise than on the bright side; but now, without any tangible fear, I was unable to still my beating heart, my very fingers trembled with the strong desire I had to flee away, to escape the black cloud that seemed to be hanging over me.

I had promised to remain three days, but this in my present state of mind was impossible, I must go home.

After breakfast I pleaded a severe headache, and very truly, for my head ached severely enough from want of rest during the night. Mrs. Mordant having decided to return with me, we all started inside the great family coach. Godfrey and the two young Mordants singing "Home Again" with all their might.

CHAPTER XIII.

"The clouds return after the rain."

ON my return home I found a letter from my grandfather, dated at New York. He was to have sailed by the *Plymouth* three days after the date of his letter, which, in some unaccountable way, must have been detained after it had received the London postmark, and ought to have reached me at least eighteen days before. My grandfather must now be in Edinburgh, where he would have arrived, wind and tide holding good, a fortnight previously.

In the letter I held in my hand he urged me to set out for Edinburgh immediately on its reaching Harford Yettes, so that I might be at home to welcome him on his arrival. He had written to the housekeeper telling her to have fires put on and the house prepared for my arrival.

The detention of my letters annoyed me greatly. Besides the disappointment to myself, how like neglect it would seem, my not being at home as he wished previous to his arrival. What must my grandfather think of my conduct? I asked of myself—such apparent negligence—a total disregard to his wishes and comfort. What a return to make to one who, from the first day I saw him, had studied my happiness in everything.

It occurred to me that there must be some other letters for me at the post-office besides this one, and they had been detained also; my grandfather would have written to me on his arrival, and since then more than once or twice. I would

go and ascertain for myself what had become of my letters, and why the one I had received had not reached me long before.

Taking Godfrey with me, we walked to the post-office at Leighton village. I preferred walking ; I was too much excited to sit down even in a carriage ; I needed exercise to brace my nerves, and the coolwind to fan my fevered temples.

On our arrival at the post-office I was told that the reason why my letter was not delivered to the man sent daily for the letters was that the post-master had a shock of paralysis exactly eighteen days before that. Previous to his taking the fit he had locked up my letter, together with one or two others received by that day's post, and not until the day before was he able to tell them, nor were they aware he had done so ; there were no other letters for me, nor had any come from Edinburgh in the meantime. The person who spoke to me was the postmaster's wife ; she said : " I took charge of the letters myself during my husband's illness, there could be no mistake."

I now enquired at what time the mail left for the north, and what accommodation there was for passengers.

" The mail coach leaves at six in the evening, and carries four inside and two outside passengers ; the inside is very comfortable."

" When does it reach Edinburgh ?"

" To-morrow evening : the mail travels all night."

" Where can I engage places in the mail ?"

" Here, my lady ; we keep the coach-office as well as the post-office."

" Can I have the inside for myself ?"

"Oh, yes, the seats are seldom all taken, and if they were we would give your ladyship the preference."

"I will be here by six."

"Oh, no hurry, the mail will wait for you, my lady."

I stared as the woman said this; she saw my astonishment, and added: "We do not allow it to wait for every one, only for the family at the Hall."

I was not aristocratic enough to appreciate, as I ought to have done, the deference shown to the Lauds.

To be back at the village at the appointed hour, I had to make the best use of my time. Arrived at home I told Mrs. Mordant of my intention to leave Harford Yettes by the evening mail for Edinburgh, requesting her to remain until she heard from me of my future plans for Godfrey. She gladly assented to this; her own home at Saltoun, never the most happy, would at present be less agreeable than ever, by the presence of the Misses Rawdon.

I made presents of money to Mrs. Morrison and each of the servants, with a double portion to poor Hannah; and seated in the old coach, accompanied by Miss Young, Philip and his maid, bade adieu to Harford Yettes with a heavy heart. We were soon at Leighton village, and placed comfortably by Joseph in the Royal mail on our way to Edinburgh.

I had now time to think, or endeavour to think, what could be the cause of my grandfather's silence, and I asked myself the startling question, "Was he going to throw me off as he had done my mother?"

I know his nature was impulsive in the extreme, and so jealous of the love which he considered he had a right to, that I could easily fancy my seeming negligence to his oft repeated desire that I should be at home to receive him, exciting a feeling of slighted love in his bosom, which, coming from

one who owed everything to him as I did, might give rise to anger, such as had induced him to absent himself from his home for fourteen years, in order to punish one who, nearly all the time was sleeping in her grave; if he could thus relentlessly punish her, whom even now he spoke of as his best beloved, how would he deal with a comparative stranger. I did not fear his leaving home again, his advanced age precluded that idea, but I did fear the sternness of soul which might thus be excited towards me.

I took his letter from my pocket, and again perused it with care, weighing every word, and then for the first time I observed that there was not the slightest allusion made to my money; he did not even advert to having concluded the business he had gone to Cuba in order to arrange. The letter contained very little, except that he was sick and tired of Cuba, longed for the rest of home, and to see myself once more; concluding as it had commenced, by impressing on me his wish that I should be in Edinburgh to meet him. It now occurred to me, that in his last letter he complained bitterly of the roguery of George Young, and his dishonest partner. I felt sure that all hopes of recovering my inheritance was gone, and that the old man did not like to tell me so. If this was the case, and that he himself would cast me off, what would become of myself and my child. I was sure it was not illness which occasioned his silence; in that case Mrs. Howard would have written. In my mind's eye I went back to the bitter life of privation and shirt-sewing in Mrs. Wilson's attic; was all that to be gone over again?

I knew but too well I could claim nothing as the widow of Sir Francis Laud; so conscious was I of this, that I had never used a shilling of the money received from the estate for the use of either myself or Philip. I had drawn upon my grandfather's banker for every farthing of our expenses.

I had still a few pounds left of my last remittance. I asked myself, with a trembling heart, where were my next funds to come from ?

What a difference the last few hours had made in my life prospects ; the night before one of a gay party, secure in the present and in the future ; now, I was hurrying on to seek a face that might meet mine with an unforgiving frown, or worse still, order his door to be shut against me, and resolutely deny me an opportunity of excusing myself.

My companions had long since been fast asleep ; we had changed horses three times, and still I sat looking into the darkness, my hot eyeballs feeling as if the eyelids were too small to cover them. I had not slept the previous night, and, worn out, I seemed to lose my consciousness in sleep every now and then, to find, when I awoke, my eyes staring into the dark night as if they had never rested.

The morning came, a grey cold dawn ; snow and sleet falling, falling, without intermission, as if the elements were in unison with my miserable thoughts. The cold was intense, and notwithstanding his being well wrapped up, Philip, on awaking, complained of cold. A strange feeling that complaint of the child excited in my breast ; as if it was hard he should have to suffer cold before the time came, (not far off probably,) when we would both have again to endure the cold and hunger which had been our lot in his infancy.

Edinburgh—how cold, and wet, and dreary, the long street seemed in the late wintry evening—few people out, and these hurrying along with dripping umbrellas. They were lighting the street lamps ; the man who did so speeding on more swiftly than his wont, with his ladder and lantern. I looked at my watch ; my grandfather would be in the library after dinner ; —we were in the cab which was to convey us to his home—

I feared to call it mine even in thought—we passed the dining-room and library windows—light in both, but not candles, only fire light,—how strange !

I could scarcely wait for the man to knock at the door, and open the cab for me to get out ; I sprang up the steps and into the hall—Mrs. Howard was there—a long, sad face—it made me sick at heart—“ Where is grandpapa ?—in the library ?”

“ Alas no, he is not yet come, the ship is due a fortnight, and has not been heard of.”

This was too much for my over-strung mind and body ; for the first time in my life I sank senseless and fainting on the floor.

When I recovered I was lying on my own bed in the room I had occupied since first I became an inmate of my grandfather's house ; everything in its place as I had left it, and but for the anxious faces of Mrs. Howard and Miss Young by my bed, I might have fancied Harford Yettes and its old Tower a myth, or part of some wild dream ; that Lady Laud was still the occupant of Rayton House, and my dear grandfather waiting tea for me in the library.

I begged of Mrs. Howard to tell me all she knew of my grandfather and the ship.

“ I know nothing,” was her reply, “ only that nineteen days ago I received his letter telling me he was to sail in the *Plymouth*, and that I was to keep fires through the whole of the rooms, as he had written to you to come home ; that I might expect you in two or three days after receiving his letter, and himself a few days later.”

“ Have you made any inquiries about the ship ?”

“ Yes, I went to Robertson and Johnston's a week after I got the letter, and asked them what could be the meaning of

the delay, both of your own return, and the General's. Their reply was, that either or both might arrive that day; that the steamer was overdue, a common occurrence in winter; that probably you had some slight indisposition which unfitted you for travelling for a few days. There was no cause for anxiety, I need not fear. But I did fear then, at least for my master, and they fear now; I have gone several times, and each time I go they say less about it. Three days ago they wrote to you, but you must have missed their letter on the way."

I slept that night, one long, sound sleep, awaking only with the day-break. I raised my soul in silent adoration to my Heavenly Father for having sent me such deep refreshing sleep; prayed earnestly with bitter tears that He would direct my steps in the way, and if it were possible restore my grandfather to his home. As I put up my petition, I trembled lest the dear grey head I prayed to see once more might now be lying, fathoms deep, beneath the stormy waves of the wild Atlantic.

I made a quick toilet that morning, and, accompanied by Maida, my unfailing friend in all my joy and woe, was at the office of Messrs. Robertson and Johnston, as the man in charge was lighting the fires in the chambers. I was too much excited to sit down and wait for the hour which I was told must intervene ere either of the partners would arrive, and I passed the time in walking swiftly up one street and down another. An early newsboy came leisurely along with one of the morning papers. "News of the *Plymouth*." "News of the *Plymouth*." How eagerly I held out my hand for the paper, giving him a shilling in return.

I was close by a confectioner's shop, and going in I searched with restless, anxious eye, for the promised news; down

each column my eye vainly went, until at last : " No news yet of the *Plymouth* ; the underwriters are getting very anxious, it will be a heavy loss to them."

I laid the paper on the counter and left the shop, unable to thank the woman, who had civilly handed me a chair when I entered. She looked at me with a sympathising air as I went out ; most likely she knew well why I had so rapidly scanned the columns of the paper ; there were more hearts than mine in Edinburgh sinking with fear for the fate of the *Plymouth*.

Robertson and Johnston could tell me no more than the *Morning Post* had done ; they were evidently without hope of ever again seeing him I so loved and they themselves had respected as one of their surest friends. I was shown into their inner sanctum, where old Mr. Robertson sat, where few of even their oldest friends were ever admitted. This deference was shown to me because of my sore distress. They had no hope themselves, they could offer none to me. The *Plymouth* was due twenty days.

Mr. Robertson took one of my hands in both his own, and tried to comfort me, the old man's lip quivering as he spoke, " If our worst fears should be realized, your ladyship has the satisfaction of knowing that General Fortesque was a Christian in word and deed, none gave more liberally, or felt more deeply for his needy brethren than he. He was an old man too, as old as I am ; there were only a few years at most left to him ; and when old age such as ours comes, it brings with it so many infirmities, that at the best it is but labour and sorrow, and under this, as in all other afflictions, our wisest and best course is to bow our head to the rod of Him who, as he smites, sends balm to heal the wound."

I rose and, without speaking a word, left the office of Messrs.

Robertson and Johnston, the commonplace consolation of the old man still ringing in my ears. The burden laid on my heart seemed greater than I was able to bear, and Mr. Robertson's words were not such as to lighten it.

Very true, Mr. Robertson, you have spoken the words of truth and soberness, the very words which have from day to day been spoken to the sons and daughters of affliction, for six thousand years, yea and I could have said the same, word for word, had thy soul been in my soul's stead. Miserable comfort! One little word which fell from the old man's lips had almost taken away all hope, "he *was* an old man." What an awful significance lay in that little word *was*.

I could not go home. Home! How little of home there was in that great house for me, with its large empty chair in each room, reminding me so painfully of the genial smile and the kind words which ever greeted me from them in the old time, and made home in the truest sense of the word.

I turned my face from Royal Crescent and wandered on without thinking where. I scarce knew I had left Edinburgh until I was in front of Dr. Murison's cottage in Leith Walk; the sight of it brought memories of the past, and the train of thought induced, recalled me to the present; it occurred to me that by going down to Leith or Granton pier I might gain intelligence of the *Plymouth*. I signed to the first Jarvey I met, and telling him I wished to go down to Leith or Granton pier in order to hear any news there might be of the *Plymouth*, I very innocently asked him, which place he thought would be the best to obtain the desired information.

"Weel," said he, as he stood with the door of the cab in his hand, looking very wise, and I must say as if he sympathized with me at the same time, "I could na jest say whilk wad be the best, baith places are guid, 'cause there's ships and sailors

at baith o' them, and sailors 'ill ken better about her than landsmen. But we can gang ta the ane first, and gin we git nae satisfaction there, we'll gang tae the ither gin ye like."

"Yes," replied I, "I think that would be a good plan."

"The maister o' the *John's* is a cousin o' mine," continued Jarvey, "an' the *John's* is jest come to Granton pier frae New York, I reckon he'll ken a' about the *Plymouth*; think ye wull we gang there first?"

"Oh, yes," replied I eagerly, "I think we ought."

Slap went the cab door, up he sprang upon the dicky and turning his horse we were soon bowling fast along the way to Granton pier. By and bye we were alongside of the *John's*, a sailing vessel of no very great dimensions. Fastening his horse's reins, Jarvey jumped from the dicky and was along the gangway of the *John's* talking to a thick-set looking man in a pea jacket in less time than it has taken to write it. In a few minutes my good-natured driver was again at the door of the cab, the sailor following him with a slow swaggering step.

"This is Captain Skinner o' the *John's*, mem," said cabby by way of introduction, and turning to Captain Skinner he added, addressing the sailor, "Skipper this is the lady 'at wants to hear about her freens 'at's on board the *Plymouth*."

The sailor bowed, standing a few feet off from the cab, his hands stuck in the capacious pockets of his pea jacket, and looking as if he expected me to say something.

"Do you know anything about the *Plymouth*?" enquired I.

"Nae muckle," rejoined the sailor, "only 'at she's safe enough, she's a guid boat, and there a' guid han's on board; there's nae fear o' her."

I could have clasped the sailor in my arms and kissed both sides of his rough face in my gratitude, although in my inmost heart I feared his news was far too good to be true.

"But every one says she is lost," said I, speaking the thoughts which were passing in my heart rather than replying to his assurance of the safety of the *Plymouth*.

"Na, they dinna do that," said the sailor with a half laugh, "naebody says that, but them 'at kens naething aboot it, or else them 'at wants tae gar ither folk think it; is ye're father or ye're brither on board?"

"Neither, but my grandfather is, and I have no father or brother, no one but him to care for me." As I spoke the unbidden tears came to my eyes.

"Dinna ye greet, lassie," said the sailor, "there's nae ae bit fear o' the auld man," and turning to Jarvey he continued, "How mony days did ye say she was due, Bob?"

"They say she's twenty days due the day."

"Is that a'," said the sailor, "that's a great haet tac mak sic a stramash aboot; afore the steamboats began we did na think muckle tae be due sax weeks. I've been due sax weeks mysel' afore noo."

"But," said I, "I went to my grandfather's agents, who are respectable lawyers in the city, and they say they fear there's little hope of her."

"Lawyers," replied the sailor with a scornful laugh; "jest the vera folk 'at's raised the sough; did ye think they wad say she's comin' hame? Na, nae fear o' them sayin' sae, that wad be takin' the bread out o' their ain teeth; think ye they wad dae that?"

"But they have no interest in saying what is false," said I; "it could do them no good, and they are both respectable men."

"Oh, I dare say they are," returned the skipper, with a dry cough; "but for mysel' I've nae respec for the like o' them, a' when idle cheels 'at set at the fireside a' day, an'

dae little else bit set ither folk by the lugs ; an' for the guid it wad dae them, that's jest what they're at, it wad do them a' the guid 'at's int ; thae lawyers are maist a' insurance folk, an' is na this a gran' chance for them ; word o' a wreck for thae chaps is better than a still nicht at the deep sea fishin' for dacent folk ; its like enough they wanted you to insure the auld man's life wi' them."

I did not reply ; little as I knew of worldly men, I was well aware this was folly.

" Let me see," said the sailor, turning his head to one side with a thoughtful look, as if he would fain give me some data for comfort. " There was a gay rough twa three days about the time we sailed ; we had to lie tee a' the time ; the *Plymouth* has been out in it, an' pitten back to New-York ; maybe for coals, maybe for some repair 'at their ain hands could na dee ; but there's nae fear o' her, she'll be hame afore the moon's a week aulder. Wad ye come on board mem, an' get a ship biscuit ?"

I refused the sailor's proffered hospitality, with many thanks for the kind way in which he had tried to assure me of my grandfather's safety ; and bade Jarvey drive to the other pier in hopes we would gain some information there.

" Deed ye need na gang there, mem," said the sailor ; " they canna tell ye ony mair than I hae deen ; gang ye hame an' content yersel, the auld man 'ill sune be wi' ye again."

I could not follow his advice, I must be employed, motion was necessary ; sitting still and without an object then, I must have gone crazy.

In Leith we met with no one like the kind skipper ; only one unvarying answer, given with a long solemn face : They could not say any thing about the *Plymouth*." " She was

long due, but maybe she would come home yet." I felt sick at heart as I listened to each answer, all alike hopeless.

We lingered as long as we had any one to speak to; at last as the cold winter twilight was darkening into night, we saw that one by one every human being but Jarvey and myself had left the wharf. Dispirited and sick at heart I bade him drive to my own cheerless home, dreading the painful associations there more than the loneliness of the cab in the half-lit streets.

As we passed along, several newsboys called out as in the morning, News of the *Plymouth*, News of the *Plymouth*; the goodnatured cabman stopped his horse, and putting his head in at the window asked if he would get me a paper; I answered in the negative; knowing well what the news was, I could not bear to look at it again.

As we passed the house in driving up to the door, I observed that the shutters in both the dining room and library were shut, so that even the firelight of the preceding evening was not visible. With the exception of a light in the hall, the whole house seemed wrapt in darkness; it accorded well with the gloom of my spirit.

Sarah opened the door, and I found Mrs. Wilson in the hall as if waiting for me.

"Oh! I am glad you are come," said she, speaking low as we do when our dead lie in the house, "did you see the paper?"

"Yes, early in the morning; there is nothing there, but I have been to Granton pier and the master of a sailing vessel told me there was severe weather some time after the *Plymouth* sailed, and that it was most likely she had been disabled by the gale and returned to New York for repairs; he says he is sure the *Plymouth* is safe."

"I am sure of that too;" replied Mrs. Howard in the same low tone as before; and while she spoke Jarvey entered the hall, holding a newspaper spread out in both hands.

"Look here, Miss," cried the good-natured fellow in a hearty tone which Mrs. Howard met with a 'hush'! and pointing with his finger, he drew my attention to the words: "Arrival of the passengers and crew of the ill-fated *Plymouth*," and then followed a long list of names, the very first of which was General Fortesque. I could give no utterance to the gratitude which filled my very heart of hearts, but weak as a child, I sank on one of the hall chairs, and with folded arms and closed eyes lifted up my soul in silent adoration to Him who "hath mercy ever."

Presently I threw off my hat and cloak and went into the dining-room, where the cloth was laid for dinner and a bright fire in the grate. I had Jarvey's newspaper in my hand, and asked Mrs. Howard to have the chandelier lit that I might read the whole paragraph. While waiting for the light I went to the fire-place, and standing in front warmed my hands, which were almost stiff with cold; a slight noise as if some one stirred in the room made me look to one side; and there, in his own arm chair, sat grandpapa, my own dear grandpapa, fast asleep!

I did not dare to touch him; I could not speak, or scarcely move, but I knelt down close by his chair in silent adoration to my Father in Heaven, who had restored to me my earthly father; who had caused light to shine on my darkness, who had made the crooked paths straight, and the rough places even before me, causing my sorrow to pass away as the waters in the South.

I placed a low ottoman close by his side, and sat down to await his waking. I had not long to wait. When he awoke

he turned towards the fire, and taking the poker broke the coals into a blaze, saying as he did so :

“ What can keep that child.”

“ Is it me you want, grandpapa,” said I. My arms were round his neck in a moment, and my lips kissing his dear cheek again and again.

“ Oh, darling,” said he, pressing me to his heart, “ I am at home again now you are here ; I felt like an unfledged bird in a strange nest without you. So you thought I had gone to live with old Neptune, eh ? and you have been out all this cold rainy day seeking tidings of me ?”

“ I was trying to find some one who could give me news of the *Plymouth*, and while I was down at Granton pier and Leith speaking to the sailors, the newspapers were telling of your safety to every one in Edinburgh.”

“ At Granton pier, speaking to the sailors !” exclaimed he, laughing heartily ; “ what in the name of wonder took you down there ? I went to Robertson and Johnston’s in search of you, and they told me you had been there in the morning. Poor old Robertson was almost as glad to see me as you are yourself ; they told me that one of their clerks whom they sent to see you safe home, saw you call a coach on Leith Walk and drive off ; but it would never have entered my head to look for you at either Granton pier or Leith.”

I told him how I came to think of going to Granton pier, and of good-tempered Jarvey, and his kind-hearted cousin “ the Skipper.”

“ Ah ! that is so like a sailor ; perhaps he did not really think it at all likely that the *Plymouth* was safe ; as I find every where, sailors and landmen both, had quite given up all hopes of her ; but, sailor-like, he could not bear to see a woman in distress, and probably thought he was quite jus-

tified in telling one or two fibs to send you home with an easy heart; he hit on some thing very near the truth, however; we were out eleven days, in one storm after another all the time, until at last the water got into the engine house; and had it not been for the timely appearance of the *Lady Peel*, whose captain took us all, passengers and crew, on board, we would have fared ill enough; in half an hour after the last of us were safe and warm on board the *Lady Peel*, we saw the poor *Plymouth* sink beneath the waters like a stone.

“The *Lady Peel* was bound for New York, and from thence we sailed for Britain with the mail that brought the news of the disastrous fate of the *Plymouth*.”

We had a happy dinner that evening, grandpapa and me with Philip and his governess seated on either side of the table by particular request of our “wayworn traveller” as he called himself.

CHAPTER XIV.

Thou anointest my head with oil;
My cup runneth over.

WHILE we were seated at breakfast the day after my grandfather's return, he said, addressing me :

"I have been waiting all this time for you to ask if I had succeeded in getting hold of your money."

In truth I had not once thought of it since the last time I re-perused his letter, while seated in the mail coach on my way to Edinburgh; I then felt convinced, from his silence on the subject, together with a retrospective review I took of the last letter I had received previous to that, that the money was gone; and from the time I arrived in Edinburgh my thoughts were so fully occupied with himself, that they had never once adverted to the money.

I said all this in a few words, adding, "Now that I have you again, grandpapa, I care little for the money; you are more to me than all the money in the world."

"I am an old man, my child; I have saved nothing. What would become of you were I no more?"

"We will not think of that, grandpapa, now that we have only just found each other again," said I putting my arm round his neck, and my lips to his cheek; "you will live twenty years yet; I will be old myself then, and Philip will be a man."

"We must not build on my life or Philip's manhood either, both may prove broken reeds, a house built on the sand."

"Well, grandpapa, I shall take lessons in music and lan-

guages, and if I require to do so in the far future, I can teach; I have studied Latin with Mr. Hutton ever since he came to Harford Yettes, although I did not tell you, because I wished to surprise you with my knowledge."

"Ah!" replied he with a pleased look, "I am glad to hear that you have been improving your time; teaching is a more feasible plan for a lady to support herself than a life of dependence on old or young. I will find masters for you, and you shall begin your studies forthwith: in the meantime, I must shew you what I have brought from Cuba; if I was not able to bring you gold, I have at least not returned empty handed."

As he spoke, he took from his pocket book some papers which he unfolded, and put on the table in such a manner that almost at a glance I saw they were drafts on the Bank of Scotland in my favour, for thirty thousand pounds.

I looked at the bills, then at my grandfather, again at the bills, and then! alas for my sense! I laughed, just as a child would who has a pretty toy given her.

By my grandfather's advice, I had Godfrey and his tutor removed to Edinburgh, where they boarded at Morningside, in the house of Mr. Hutton's mother, the plan laid out for Godfrey being that he should live in Edinburgh until his twentieth year, spending four months during each summer in travelling with his tutor through England and the Scottish Highlands, the last year to be passed in France and Germany.

This plan was carried out faithfully by Mr. Hutton, who was at once his instructor and companion; and the result was that Godfrey, on his twenty-first birthday, inherited his land and title; and ultimately became the best knight that Harford Yettes had known, since the days of Good Sir Harry.

Isabella Mordant became the bride of Godfrey on the first

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Christmas day after he attained his majority, Mr. Hutton officiating on the occasion as parish minister of Leighton. Philip lost his governess soon after; the minister of Leighton finding it too lonely to live in that quiet pretty personage alone, and Miss Young fancying there was more of Paradise there than usually falls to the lot of us poor mortals.

I had scarcely been a couple of weeks in Edinburgh; during that time I had listened at least twice to all grandpapa's accounts of the troubles and pleasures of his Cuban life; and in return, I had detailed most minutely for his amusement the exciting scenes I had passed through, and the long stories of the past I had heard at Harford Yettes, first from the housekeeper, and latterly from Mrs. Mordant; we had worn each subject threadbare, and our evenings were beginning to feel long.

Notwithstanding his efforts to the contrary, poor grandpapa generally passed the evening hours fast asleep in his great chair; he used to rub his eyes, on awaking, and ask if he had really been asleep, expressing himself as quite shocked with his constant derelictions, in this way, from the path of politeness; but it would not do; the dear old head, so erect in his waking hours, would nod and the wearied eyes close. Then, I again resumed my book, and so the evening passed by until the supper tray was brought in.

One of those long dreamy evenings, grandpapa fast asleep in his chair, I half reading, half holding a retrospective review of my past life, a favourite occupation of mine in those long hours, when notwithstanding that everything was warm and bright around, I would feel dull and lonely, and wish so earnestly to hold communion with my kind, the servant handed me a visiting card, which I had barely time

to look at, ere tall dark Arthur Laud was by my side, apologizing for the liberty he had taken in calling at such an hour.

Liberty! why, I was delighted; his handsome face bringing nearly as much sunshine to our quiet drawing-room, as it had done when I first saw him on Christmas night at Hartford Yettes; he had a way of imparting his own gleeful spirit to those around him which few possess.

My grandfather was equally pleased to receive Mr. Laud as I was myself, and in the course of a few weeks he became a constant visitor, invariably spending his evening hours in our drawing-room.

Arthur Laud had a richly stored mind; he had travelled with his eyes open, and the information he had so gathered he was able to share with others, by an eloquence natural to himself; his musical powers, too, were above mediocrity; he played, if not with the execution, at least with the touch of a master; and the songs of the German fatherland, which he had learned during his residence on the banks of the Rhine, were so much above and beyond all music I had been accustomed to, that listening to those strange words and strains, sung by his rich deep voice, was to me almost fascination.

He brought me books I had never heard of, from which he read extracts and told me sufficient to excite a desire to know more. Thus his presence in Edinburgh was the advent of almost a new life to me; no weary days or long evenings now.

The winter passed thus; a pleasant winter, March with his winds and April with her showers; and then my dream of sisterly affection and pure friendship was suddenly and most unpleasantly dispelled.

One evening in the end of April, Mr. Laud brought me a huge bouquet, composed of China rosebuds, saying, as he placed it in my hand,—

"This must last for a whole week; I am needed at Ley Grange."

"When do you go?"

"To-night; an hour hence. I cannot return for at least a week, and I have brought you these rosebuds so that they may blow in my absence and prevent you from forgetting me."

"No fear of my doing that; our quiet home will be dull without your pleasant visits."

He looked earnestly in my eyes for a moment and then said, hastily—

"Innes, will you be the mistress of my home at Ley Grange? as you have been of my heart since I first saw you."

The question, and the way in which it was put, calling me by my Christian name, startled me as if a thunderbolt had fallen at my feet: his quick eye was not slow to mark the effect his words had produced, and he added, almost without waiting for a reply:

"I have been too precipitate, we will talk of this six months hence."

"Mr. Laud," replied I, firmly, recovering myself, "you can never be more to me than a dear friend, and that you are already."

As I spoke his eye flashed with a pleased light, as if my words gave encouragement which my looks had forbidden, and he pressed his suit with an ardour most perplexing.

He did not leave Edinburgh that night or for many nights after, ever talking on the same subject, as if he would coerce me into acquiescence, until the sound of his well-known footstep made me feel nervous and angry; he constantly talked as if I had given him a right to consider himself accepted

lover, by receiving his visits during the winter. At last I wrote to him, saying that if I ever married again I would become the wife of one I had known and loved in my girlhood, long before I had come to Edinburgh or seen his cousin; and had I not then believed that other to be lost to me forever, I would never have become the wife of Sir Francis Laud.

I saw him once after this; a painful interview for us both.

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CHAPTER XV.

This is the stream we used to fish,
And this my favourite hill;
An' here's the school an' there the kirk,
An' yon's the auld flour mill.
But whar's my Father's hearty look?
My Mither's kindly smile?—
I steeked the door and sobbed aloud,
Whan I thought on langsyne.

SINCE his return from Cuba my grandfather had written many times to the manse of Ballenfold trying to induce its minister to visit us; we had long kind letters in reply, but each contained an excuse,—he could not come—he was very busy with his people—he had no one to take his place.

We surely expected that with the month of May the General Assembly would bring him to us, but he came not; he seemed to have ignored Edinburgh.

One of his parishioners, Sir Edward Pakingham, came to the Assembly as ruling elder from Ballenfold; he was an old friend of my grandfather's, and dined with us frequently while in town.

Sir Edward talked in the highest terms of the good which Mr. Tytler was doing among all classes, his unwearying efforts in the cause to which he had devoted his life; spoke of his sermons being fit for an Edinburgh audience, adding, "I fear he has too much work and no play, his hand is so thin, and as white as a woman's."

How these words haunted me; how often I repeated to myself in the solitude of my own chamber, "His hand is so thin, and as white as a woman's!"

It was not wont to be either. His hand was large in every way, as he was himself, large and brown, not thin and white; that thin hand came between me and the sunlight, making

my days long and restless; at night it lay upon my eyes, making my brain hot and feverish.

We spoke often of Dominie Sampson, of the manse of Ballenfold, its garden with the bee-hives at the far end, and the little burn that ran by the manse, on the banks of which in grandpapa's young days, they bleached the household linen; of the shrubbery in front of the house, the straight walk leading to the hall door, bordered with its bright holly hedge; the honeysuckle that grew and blossomed all the long summer by the parlour window; all these and much more I knew so well. The old man seemed to feel young again while describing, with womanly minuteness, each nook and cranny of the old house and garden, each saugh tree that grew by the burnside. The six cherry trees on each side the gate, planted by his mother in the first year of her marriage, when she came, a young girl of nineteen, to be the minister's wife, and mistress in the manse. She used to measure their growth, with the growth of himself, her eldest son, until the cherry trees grew to be above his head, and at last, to tower above the roof of the manse itself. Thus we would spend long hours talking of old times, the manse, and woods and braes of Ballenfold; and people them over again with forms long since buried in the dust.

"Shall we not go some of these lovely-summer days and see the old manse, grandpapa?"

"With all my heart; there is nothing I should like better, few things I would like so well; I would have gone long ago, but I cannot bear to be parted from you even for a day or two, and I was not sure whether you would go."

"When shall we go?"

"To-morrow, if you like."

"Oh, yes; we shall go to-morrow."

“ At five in the morning ; the mail, which is the only conveyance, goes at that hour; perhaps this will damp your ardour ?”

“ No, indeed, I like to rise early when I have a motive ; shall we take Philip with us ?”

“ What a question ? as if I would go without Philip ; I could no more part with Philip than with yourself.”

“ Take care, you must not make me jealous ; do you remember how I used to send him up stairs when we came in from walking because you *would* kiss him first.”

He laughed in reply, a laugh so full of happiness, as he kissed my cheek ; he liked to know he was beloved.

Next morning I was awake while yet a thin, bright crescent moon shone clear in the grey sky, and by the time the great sun with all his rosy clouds around him came blazing forth, I was in the breakfast room, waiting for coffee to be served, and grandpapa to make his appearance.

Twenty minutes to five brought Jarvey, to escort us to the mail ; Jarvey was never late, not half a minute.

We were soon comfortably seated in the mail coach, and going at rather a slow pace through the silent street, on our way to Ballenfold.

Philip was almost crazy with delight on seeing the mail coach, with its scarlet coated guard ; he fancied we were going home, as he called Harford Yettes ; Philip could not reconcile himself to living in a fine street in Edinburgh, without trees, green grass or birds ; Harford Yettes, with its facilities for wandering in the open air from morn to night, his morning and evening walks to the dairy, with Mrs. Morrison, the lambs, and flowers ; but beyond all, the freedom to run with Maida, as fast and far as he pleased ;—Harford Yettes was his home.

We were at the village of Ballenfold by ten o'clock ; the manse was scarcely a quarter of a mile distant, and grand-papa was to be our guide.

With Philip's hand in his, he walked on talking as he went : There is the School house, there the Church—and here the pump ; the dear old pump we used to crowd round and drink from on our way from school.

And in semblance of the old school-time he took up the handle, and pumping a little threadlike rill, we all drank of the clear, pure water, using our hands in place of a cup.

One of the villagers, seeing us endeavouring, as she imagined, to quench our thirst, brought out a jug and offered it to us ; she little thought that the old man to whom she spoke was the son of a minister of Ballenfold, who had lain for fifty years in his grave, and the water was sweet as nectar because drunk school-boy fashion from his hand as it had been from the same well, and in the same way, seventy years before.

We were soon in front of the manse,—at the white gate ; how well I had been taught to know the tall grey house, the cherry trees and holly hedge.

“ Look,” I exclaimed, “ there is the parlor window half open, and the honeysuckle in full blossom.”

“ You will go up to the house and see Dominie Sampson, as you call him, and I will bring Philip round to the garden.”

The old man's hand trembled as he laid it on my shoulder, and his voice was full of emotion while he spoke ; he wished to be alone with the child.

Within a few yards of the hall door the holly hedge ended, and from thence a little gravel walk on each side led in a semi-circle past the window and round to the back of the house. I walked in the direction of the open window where

the honeysuckle grew, keeping as close to the house as possible, so that I might discover if there was any one in the room, without I myself being seen. The window was low, within a foot of the ground, completely covered at each side with the thickly clustering leaves and fragrant blossoms of the honeysuckle, standing behind which, I could see through the leaves everything in the room, and there, within a few feet of where I stood, I saw Dominie Sampson!

He stood with his back leaning against the mantelpiece, his face turned towards me; he held a book in his hand, that hand thin and white, his cheek-bones higher, and his eyes larger than ever I remembered to have seen them; he put down the open book on a table covered with faded green cloth, which stood within arm's length of the fire place, and coming towards the open window, leaned for a second or two on the ledge, looking straight out in the direction of the road; a wild bee was humming round and round the honeysuckle behind which I stood, her hum so loud that the still air resounded with her song, until, having completed her search for the sweetest flower, she buried herself deep among the petals of a large blossom. No sooner had she ceased her humming and commenced her work, than Dominie Sampson, leaning from the window, plucked the flower which contained the "busy bee." His hand was so close to me I could have touched it. He smelt the flower, and then, lifting the book, sat down on the opposite side of the table, laying down the blossom close by the book he was reading from, his face still turned towards the window.

I left my hiding place, and with quiet stealthy steps went to the front door. It was wide open, probably to admit the air, the day being sultry and close.

How grey and old looking all within the hall and staircase

seemed; it was furnished in a style of the most primitive simplicity; a well-worn reddish brown oil cloth, without a pattern, aided by a couple of straw mats, covered the floor. The walls, of a dull bluish grey, were unadorned save by a row of pins, on two of which hung umbrellas; everything critically clean, but dim and grey looking; the brass rods of the stair-carpet, alone, were bright and clear.

On a small brown painted table lay the minister's hat and gloves.

I took off my own hat and cloak, and hanging them on one of the pins, beside the umbrellas, I lifted Dominie Sampson's hat from the table, and put it on my own head, as I had done many a day in Peterstown, to make Katie laugh at its size; down it came, over my face to my chin as it used to do. I replaced the hat on the brown table, and with both hands smoothed my hair, which, since grandpapa's return, to please him, I wore curled as in my girlhood; then taking from my pocket a copy of *Cæsar*, which I had just begun to read when I got my last lesson in Peterstown, I opened the parlour door, and walking up to the table, where Mr. Tytler still sat, put down my book close by the one he was reading, saying as I did so:

"I have my lesson quite correct to-day, Dominie Sampson."

From the moment I entered the room, his eyes were fixed upon me, but he seemed so overcome by surprise as to be unable to speak; at last recovering himself he said:

"Innes, where did you come from?"

"From the lobby, I left my hat and cloak there."

"What brought you here? why did you come, child?"

"I came to say my lesson;" replied I, placing a chair close to the one on which he sat; and sitting down by him prepared my book as I used to do in the old time at Peterstown.

"Who came with you?"

"Grandpapa; he is in the garden;—may I have my lesson? will I read first?"

I opened the book at the last chapter.

"You cannot read that."

"Yes I can;—try me"—I read half a page.

"May I shut the book? I am tired."

"Innes; why did you come here?"

I put my arm through his, and laid my head on his shoulder, letting it rest there.

"I came to see you, Dominie Sampson, and to put you in mind of the promise you made me long ago—that when you had a house of your own I should live with you."

"When I made that promise you were a little girl and had no happy home of your own, such as you have now."

"How do you know that I am happy? you think so, because you are happy yourself; but I can not be happy, where you are not."

"My dear Innes, you must not talk like that; this house, my home, would be no fit home for you now;—you are one of the aristocracy of the land—the heiress of a large fortune,—I would be doing you a great injustice in asking you to share my humble home—I could not be guilty of such selfishness."

"But you were guilty of it,—you did ask me to share your home only two years ago;—and you told me then, that you had never seen one whom you could love except myself, that you loved me, as you knew you could not love another; that the desire of winning me to bless your home was with you day and night, and you said then, that you had a better home than falls to the lot of most men in your profession after long years of toil; your home is still the same; the same home, and trees and flowers; the same green braes

and bonny burn ; I, too, am the same, only that I am now free to do as my heart dictates ; it must be your feelings that have changed ; perhaps you dislike me now, as much as you loved me then ?”

“ You know that I love you still, as dearly as ever, perhaps with a deeper, truer love, because the object of it is more mature and womanly than the child I loved at Peters-town ; your being here to-day, your head lying on my shoulder, is a proof that you know full well my love is unchanged ; but our positions are entirely altered ; the manse of Ballenfold, with five hundred a year, might have been a suitable home for General Fortesque’s grandchild, with tastes as simple as her face is fair ; but every honest man would uplift the finger of scorn at the country parson who would endeavour, by the revival of memories which ought to be forgotten, to exert an influence on the heart of young beautiful Lady Laud, with her fortune of thirty thousand pounds.”

“ I am not Lady Laud. I never was, only by courtesy. The man who called himself my husband and Baronet of Harford Yettes bore a title he had no right to, and his nephew who was the true knight, is now installed in his rightful land and title both. Who told you I had a fortune of thirty thousand pounds ?”

“ General Fortesque. What do you think would be his reply, were I to ask him to give me his rich and beautiful granddaughter, to live in this poor house ?”

“ I am willing to rest my happiness on his answer.”

As I spoke an elderly woman, with the clearest and whitest of white muslin caps, and the cleanest of all blue striped aprons, entered the room, saying as she did so :

“ Minister, yer dinner’s on the table.”

I felt more than a little confused as I raised my head

from its resting-place; the old woman manifested no surprise but smilingly exclaimed:

“ Oh! yer come, are ye mem? well I’m real glad; yer hearty welcome,—It’ll be your things ’at’s on the lobby table? —we had muckle need o’ ye here, the minister is ower aften his lane.”

The minister, as she called him, was the first to recover his self-possession; addressing me he said: “ I will go in search of the General,” and then turning to the old woman: “ Janet, will you shew this lady where she can arrange her toilet?”,

“ Yes, sir,” with a curtesy—then to me; “ come awa’ mem, I hae your room reddy for aught day’s back; I hae twa beds in’t; I thought yer mamma was comin wi’ ye.”

I followed the old woman upstairs, wondering who was the expected visitor she had mistaken me for.

The room to which I was conducted was at the back of the house; and going to the window I threw it open to admit the sweet warm air; the garden lay beneath, and I could hear the sound of voices as Mr. Tytler talked and laughed with the General, walking up and down the broad green walk which divided the garden in two.

“ That’s your father, I reckon,” inquired the old woman looking in my face, “ and that’ll be your brither? ye’re a sister’s dochter o’ the minister?”

“ No, I am not his sister’s daughter, but that old gentleman is my grandfather.”

“ Weel now that I look again, he’s ower auld to be your father; an gin ye’re nae the minister’s sister’s dochter ye’re his brither’s, sae it’s a’ ane; gin its nae a goose its a gander.

I did not reply, and Janet employed herself in pouring water into the basin, arranging towels, &c., that I might wash my hands.

“ I’m real glad ye’re come,” she resumed, “ for the minister’s flesh is just wearin aff his banes wi’ lanesomeness ; an’ he does na eat as muckle as your little brither there wad dee ; gin ye could pit it intil his head to marry a leddy, ye wad be doing a gude turn, for ye wanna bide wi’ him, but jest till ye fa’ on anither ’at ye like better, an’ its natural enough, but I’m sair feard he’s gaen to be an auld lad, and its nae for want o’ lasses either, there’s mair than twa or three in the parish ’at’s courtin’ the minister gae thrang.”

“ There’s Miss Packingham, the Laird’s dochter,” resumed she, after pausing to take breath ; “ she’s pitten a’ her oars i’ the water to catch him, but the minister doesna care a pin’s pint for her, or my eens nae marrow’s ; she’s here twice ilka week, and sometimes aftener, wi’ her district visitor’s buke in her han’, and when I’ll gang into the study to tell him ’at she’s here, he’ll aftener pit a gloom on him than a smile, an’ it’s a great pity, she’s a fine frank leddy, an’ has a gude lock o’ siller o’ her ain, forbye what she’ll get when her faither dees ; and she’s nae miserly wi’ it, she’s rale gude to the puir folk, and mony a white shillin has she geen me ’at doesna need it ; an’ deed, I never hide that, or ony ither gude ’at I hear about her, but tell ’t a’ word for word to the minister, but I might jist haud my tongue, for a’ the gude it does, he never lats on at he hears me, nae mair than gin it was clashes and clavers. She’s rale well lookit tee ; a fine strapin lass, nae ower young or ower auld, she has na crakit the half crown yet, an’ he’s na needin to marry a thoughtless lassie ; its a wise settled lass, like her, at dees best wi’ a minister.”

Janet stopped to take breath, and going to the toilet table busied herself in dusting the looking glass, a useless labour where everything was clean to a nicety ; looking from the

window she exclaimed: "My certee! here's Miss Packingham hersel' comin' down the burnside, aneath the saugh bushes, her bit red buke i' the ae han', an her parasole i' the ither; she'll be chapin' at the door or I win down; an' I'll need to pit some mair denner on the table; sae whan ye hae settled ye're curls ye can come down to the best parlour, its on ye're right han', at the fit o'the stairs, an ye'll get Miss Packingham there afore ye."

So saying she left me to "settle my curls;" no wonder she observed the time I took, whether my hair was more unruly than usual or I more fastidious, I know not, but it seemed impossible to arrange it just as I would have it to be; however it was at last accomplished, and I descended to the best parlour, where I found Miss Packingham.

Miss Packingham welcomed me very heartily to Ballenfold as Miss Wallace, introducing herself at the same time.

"My name is Laud, not Wallace."

"Indeed! how stupid of me; I fancied Mr. Tytler said Wallace."

Without waiting for a reply, she showed me her district visiting book, saying she had come to consult Mr. Tytler about some poor people in her district, and talked without intermission of her Sabbath school class and other good works, ending by giving me a warm invitation to visit her at the Hall.

Miss Packingham was, as Janet had said, a fine "strapin lass;" she seemed about eight-and-twenty; tall and large, with a profusion of short, dark brown curls on each side of a very pretty, pleasant looking face, with a clear complexion pure red and white, the result probably of her constant exercise in the open air.

In due time Janet came to conduct us to the dining-room, having herself given an invitation to Miss Packingham, which the lady seemed to take as a matter of course; she was evidently very much at home in the manse of Ballenfold.

We found my grandfather and Mr. Tytler waiting for us in the dining-room, the former of whom greeted Miss Packingham as an old friend, and introduced me as his granddaughter, Lady Laud.

The young lady stared with a slight appearance of confusion, just the least shade, which she threw off almost instantly, saying laughingly to Mr. Tytler:

"I having been talking to Lady Laud as your niece, Miss Wallace, and pressing her to bring you oftener to dine with us at the hall."

"In which invitation I hope to share on our next visit to the manse," said my grandfather, giving her his arm, and placing her on his right hand as he took the foot of the table.

Janet had improvised quite a nice little feast for so many unexpected guests; a roast leg of mutton, (most likely the original dinner intended for the minister), a cold ham and fricassied fowl, with curds and cream, pound cake and fruit as dessert.

It certainly was Mr. Tytler, not Dominie Sampson, who did the honours of his table with such gentlemanly ease and grace.

After dinner Miss Packingham showed her "book;" received the minister's advice on several knotty points, and then bade us good-bye, saying she had to visit some of the poor on her list that afternoon; among others a very old man, John Corse, who had been church beadle for upwards of sixty years.

"Is John Corse alive yet?" asked my grandfather in pleased surprise; "if my slow steps will not be a drag on you, I too will go and see him; he must be now nearly a hundred years of age; it makes me feel quite young to hear of his being in the land of the living."

Philip would go too.

Dominie Sampson and I stood in the porch watching the trio until they had shut the white gate, gone far down the green lane in the direction of the village, and were lost to sight.

Then taking my hand in his, the minister led me past the honeysuckle window, round by the side of the manse, into the garden with its old fashioned green walks, rustic seats and hop-covered summer-house.

We walked up and down that broad green walk, hand in hand, and I listened to all my grandfather had said, and what my lover felt now, and how he had suffered in what to him had seemed the hopeless past.

A month from that day there was a gay bridal party in the drawing-room at Royal Crescent; Lady Rawdon, and nearly all her family, Mrs. Mordant and her two daughters, Godfrey bearing his knight's title with the handsomest face in the room, together with several old friends of my grandfather's. There I became the wedded wife of my first and last love, Dominie Sampson.

As I write that old familiar name, I lay down my pen, and looking from the parlour window of the manse of Ballenfold abroad on the bonny braes sloping down to the burnside where the young lambs are reposing from the noon-day sun beneath the saugh bushes, my repose and trust as great as theirs, my happiness how immeasurably greater, I ask myself the startling question, why was I not here years ago instead of months?

why was I ever a poor shirt-maker, why did I ever endure death in life when years of fear and horror passed during one night in the Snatch Tower at Harford Yettes?—The answer is a simple one,—because I would not follow the behest of the Lord, in which he says: “In your patience possess your soul.” “Whether ye eat or drink, or whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God.”

END OF VOL. II.

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