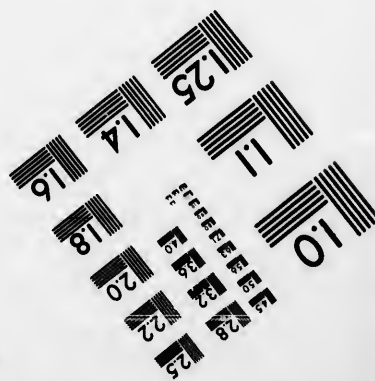
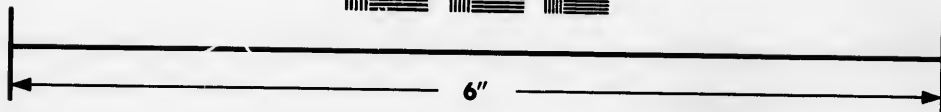
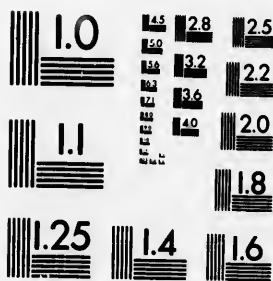


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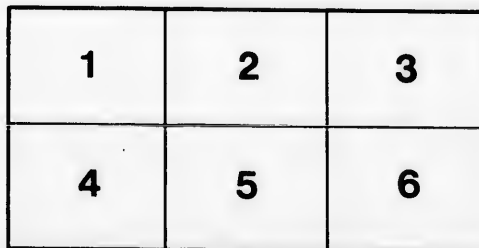
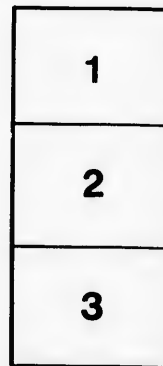
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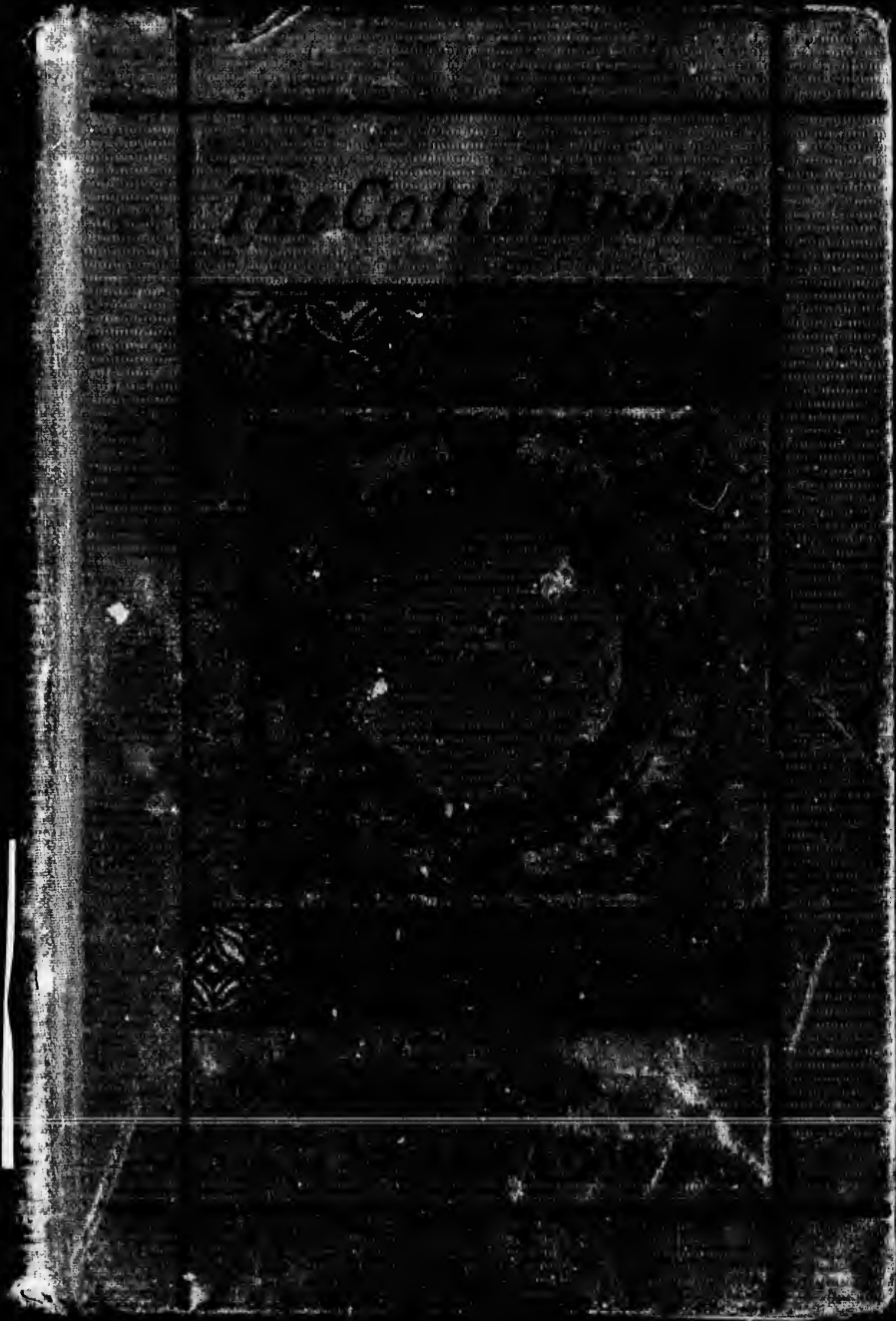
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THE STORY OF

A HEROIC AGE IN ENGLAND.

Elizabeth (Percy) Church

BY THE AUTHOR OF

"THE SCHONBERG-COTTA FAMILY," "DIARY OF KITTY
TREVELYAN," ETC.

TORONTO, CANADA:
JAMES CAMPBELL & SON.

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AGAINST THE STREAM.



CHAPTER I.

NO one who has not tried, can imagine what a pleasant thing it is to be, undeniably and consciously, an old woman.

I mean, of course, literally not symbolically.

To have the whole landscape of life behind you, and below you. To see, now and then, indications through the mists and shadows, why the path wound here through barren, empty wastes, and there through thorny thickets; in one place scaled recklessly the perilous rocky steep, in another crept in weary windings along monotonous slopes it had seemed easier to clear at a bound; or why, just there, it broke off in a sudden chasm, which at the time threatened to end its meaning and waste its work altogether. To catch some explanatory hints of a training of eye and nerve for higher work hereafter; some illuminated glimpses

of fellow-travellers, to be succored just at that perplexing turn, and nowhere else. To have the long uphill all but over, and to find "the upland slopes of duty" all but merging in the "table-land of glory," as they do, not for the exceptional hero only, but for all who follow the footprints of the Master's feet, if the Master's words are true; if heroism means, as He showed, not exceptional achievement, but self-surrendering obedience; and glory, as He is showing now, not some vague repetition of earthly pomps with a larger than earthly audience, but the expansion and illumination of every faculty, in a life fuller than the intensest life below, for a service higher, because nearer Him.

To watch such explanatory broken lights stealing over the past that reaches back so far;—to catch the dawn of unbroken, satisfying light on the future, now so near. Rest here, in the acquiescence in powers enfeebled, unequal to fresh enterprise, that have done their work and can undertake no more, save such stray quiet kindnesses as may come to us demanding to be done; rest there, in the hope of powers renewed, so that their exercise shall become once more a joy, such as it was to move or breathe in childhood.

A little faint insight through the learning and unlearning of the years,—through their tenderer tolerance, and larger judgments, into the patience of Him who has been teaching and long-suffering through the ages. A strong and ever-growing

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trust, through some discords resolved, and some despairs clashed into hopes; through some misunderstood things explained, and some wrongs righted or turned into secret instruments of martyrdom, through much forgiven and something overcome—in the purpose of Him “who willeth not that any should perish,” not because sin is a mere passing disease of the childhood of humanity, or a mere passing discord of the harmonies of the universe, but because “He willeth that all men should repent.” A bright and ever brightening hope in a heaven which shall be the seed-plot of many heavens, through that Death which is the seed of infinite life.

To find the “great multitude no man can number,” the “majority” to which we go, no longer an overwhelming dazzle of supernatural light, a crowd of unknown unindividualized angelic faces, but the blessed company where the dearest eyes wonder and smile, and the most familiar voices are heard, in that speech at once so tender and so high we know not what better to call it than song.

These things are worth waiting for, worth growing old for, worth having this world emptied for.

Can I say that?

Not always; not most healthily, I think, in moments of ecstatic foreseeing, but in those moments, more frequent when it is given to me, in some simple ways, to fill up the measure of their

service who have gone before, and so to feel that after all, this world is indeed not empty to me, though my best have gone on out of sight.

So vividly they stand before me, those old times, now that the morning mists and the noon-day haze are over, and the mists of night have scarcely come; so clearly do the old voices sound back to me in the quiet, especially from the earliest days, and so different is the world whence they come from this around me now, that I feel attracted to sit down and picture them, with just as little effort as if I were not making pictures at all, but simply tracing outlines on a series of mirrors, and transforming them thus, by some magic, into a series of stained-glass windows.

So it seems to me.

But then, of course, I always see the clear living mirror behind my outlines; and how far the stained glass represents it to others I cannot know.

It is worth while to do it, for myself at least, for I have lived through one of our country's heroic ages, and as it seems to me, have seen some of the heroes not very far off.

And, in looking back over my life, if there are any principles which have been its joy and strength, and which I could wish to see more the joy and strength of others, they are these.

Christianity is to me, and ever has been, since I learned to live by it, not so much a fresh mystery, as a revelation of mysteries—a "mystery shown;" not a clouding, but an unveiling; not a

new riddle, whose glory is that being the divinest it is the deepest, but a solution of many riddles, although indeed not yet of all.

The world and its great history are full of darkness; society and our own little histories are full of darkness, and much of this Christianity has left unconquered and unexplained.

But at the heart and centre of all is not darkness, but light; not only a mind infinite and incomprehensible, but a heart that loves and speaks; not a subtle setter-forth of riddles which humanity has to solve at its peril, or perish, but a patient Teacher of babes, to whom His human creatures are dear; not an inexorable medical examiner testing candidates for appointments, but the Physician healing the sick; not the Sphinx, but the Word.

Truth obvious indeed, and at the root of all Christian theology (is not the absence of it practically Atheism?) yet from which it seems to me most Christian theologies are forever departing into labyrinths of our own making, and ever needing to be recalled.

And flowing from this is another principle, which has strengthened me to live and hope. The light, and not the darkness, are meant to conquer, in individuals, as in the whole. Human character is not immutable, like the instincts of animals, but corrigible and perfectible; perfectible in the best to the end, corrigible in the worst to the

end; capable of radical change, capable of infinite growth.

Again, truth most obvious, if Christianity is true; yet one which in the apparent fixedness of character in all men after early youth, and the apparent invincibility of small faults in good men, in wrongs from others, in struggles with myself, I, at least, have not found it easy to hold; which, indeed, I should have found it impossible to hold, but for constant recurrence to that first great truth which is its source.

Faith in God, unbounded; and for that reason, hope for men unbounded also.

Are these things so easy to hold in a world where the chaos of a French revolution can whirl on for a century without evolving a creation?—where the Church of land after land, and age after age, has succeeded too often in silencing its noblest men?—where a Las Casas originated the slave-trade, and the abolition of slavery has not at all events resulted in a planter's Paradise of grateful industrious laborers?—where a century of philanthropic efforts leaves our English legislation powerless to lift off the accumulating weight of pauperism, and a millennium of Christianity leaves English Christians powerless to stem the increasing flood of intemperance?—where in our own little worlds all of us have seen the race not always won by the swift, nor the battle by the brave?

Do we not need in such a world a faith in God which, whatever is doubtful and whatever

is dark, leaves it not doubtful that "in Him is no darkness at all."

Do we not need a hope for man that has its root deeper than in any man, or in any history, even in Him who loving most has suffered most, who "underwent and overcame," Whose life was serving, Whose victory was in being vanquished, Whose reigning is serving, Whose reward for the service of His own is to serve better, Whose work in the midst of the throne is the old familiar shepherd's work of "leading" and feeding, Whose triumph in the day of his joy will be to "gird Himself and come forth, and serve?"

And this leads me to the third living principle of my life: belief in a heaven which is not a contradiction, but a completion of true Christian life below; in a master whose promise is, not a rewarding of seventy years of toil by an eternity of luxurious repose; nor an avenging of seventy years of abasement by an eternity of exaltation; nor a compensation for seventy years of service and suffering by an eternity of triumphal pomp and regal state; but a training by the numbered years of imperfect work here for an eternity of blessed work, unhindered and unwearyed; by seventy years of gradual deliverance from the bondage of self, not for an eternity of the gratification of self intellectual or spiritual, but for an eternity of the only liberty worth having, the liberty, not of the rights of independant atoms, but of the duties of a mutually dependent brotherhood, in the pre-

sence of the Father whom all obey, and on Whom all depend; the glorious liberty of love, the necessity of whose nature, like His who is its source and end, is to give, and in giving, before and in all its gifts to give itself, giving and receiving in that endless interchange which ensures growth, and which only is worthy to be called life.

A belief I have found not without practical importance: since earnestness and foretastes of our promised inheritance are sure to be converted by the way, and it makes not a little difference to our practical life whether we consider the truest symbol and foretaste of heaven to be the contemplation of toiling cities from suburban paradises, or the succoring and serving the poorest creature toiling in those city streets.

If I have had any power in my life to "lift up hands that hang down," to revive now and then hope for humanity in some veterans (to whom I have been as a child) worn-out with the disappointments of many victories which have failed to accomplish all they seemed to promise; or in some fallen creatures, worn-out with the despair of many defeats, it is to such simple and obvious principles as these that I owe it.

And yet, how vain to think we know the springs of the influences which have moulded us, or through which we have acted on others; so subtle are they, so simple, so subtly combined, so finely distinct?

Deeper even than its deepest principles is our

religion, rooted not in a principle, but in the Person we adore; and, since the divine history is ever deeper and wider than all the theologies and philosophies drawn from it, to me, doubtless, as to all, from the wisest to the simplest, all true power to live, or to help to live, has come from Him who, while in Himself revealing the Father, understood and saved the "sinner" who washed His feet, hoped in and saved the Disciple who denied Him loved and saved the Pharisee who "persecuted Him," Whose presence makes heaven, and must make a heaven like Himself

We may review or analyze our life into principles, as we analyze our food into alkalies, salts and acids; but no chemical combination of alkalies, salts, and acids yet invented will keep us alive.

Principles must, after all, be rooted in affections: life can only be nourished by life.





CHAPTER II.

“Fretted by sallies of his mother’s kisses,
With light upon him from his father’s eyes.”

SUCH recollections of early childhood with me are all too soon broken in upon. Yet to me also the world began with Paradise. I can dimly recall such a zone of tenderest sunlight, such a sense of being watched and delighted in, and brooded and purred over, and played with ; such a golden time of kisses and coaxings, and tender foldings up at night, and laughing wakings up in the morning,

And then, succeeding it, a time of silence and darkness and cold ; of being hushed and kept quiet because something which had made the sunshine of the home was gone, and something else which needed that lost sunshine more than any had come, and must be cherished and watched and kept alive with such artificial warmth as the world can make for motherless babes,—leaving at the moment little warmth and light to spare anywhere for me.

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A dark confused chaotic time, "without form, and void;" in looking back, I can scarcely tell whether it lasted days, or months, or years; a time when God had made for me no lights, greater or lesser, to divide the light from the darkness.

So my first associations with my brother, my own brother Piers, who was afterwards the life of my life, were rather of something subtracted than something added, rather of a great loss, than the great gift he was.

I think we shall find it thus with many of our best gifts often.

After this comes first into my recollection a pervading and overshadowing memory of clothes.

Before, it was like being a bird or a flower. But connected with that dark chaotic time, comes sense of being in a state of existence where one had always to carry about things to be taken care of, which one was in some vague and uneasy way identified with and responsible for, and which the people in the nursery who loved one most, felt to be in some sense of more importance than oneself and yet the very nature of which appeared to be that the influences which were pleasant to their wearer were pernicious to them.

It was, I suppose, the form in which my spirit had to struggle into the consciousness of matter,

"Obstinate questionings,
Blank misgivings of a creature
Moving about in worlds not realized."

How many of the lessons incident to the "shades

of the prison-house" came to me through my clothes!—through that portion of the material world which was to me so essentially part of the "Not me," and was evidently regarded by those around me as an integral portion of the "Me!"

I can remember now the delighted sense of freedom with which, one fine Sunday afternoon, I had crept, unnoticed, out of the garden door, with my faithful companion, our great black Newfoundland dog, Pluto, up the green hill outside the garden wall to the edge of the brook beyond, and was enjoying at once the joys of liberty and of tyranny in making him plunge into the water and fetch me a stick as I had seen my father do. I remember now the half-remonstrant, half-condescending way in which the grand creature yielded to my little imperiousnesses, and then, landing his freight, shook himself in a storm of sparkling drops over me and my new frock.

And I also remember a certain calm philosophical interest (which ought in any consistent biography to have presaged a genius for scientific investigation) wherewith I was observing that the drops did not penetrate my *crape* but lay on it, round and sparkling, when nurse burst upon us with baby in her arms, and a wail on her lips.

"Bless the maid! what will she be after next? Miss Bride, Miss Bride, you contrary child, how can you be so unfeeling as to forget your new *crape*, and your blessed mother, and Sunday, and

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everything, and romp about like a beggar's brat with that great brute of a dog?"

A speech which left me in such a bewilderment of images and injustices that I was too perplexed to cry or to defend myself, until the dog, his affections getting the better of his tact, shook himself in a rapture of welcome over baby and nurse, and thereby drew on himself a blow which sent him away whining in his inarticulate way; whilst I, tearfully protesting that Pluto was not a brute nor I a brat, and that I had not forgotten Sunday, for father had only just given me my Sunday gingerbread, was dragged down the steps of the dear old garden, from terrace to terrace, whining in my half-articulate way.

And I also remember to this day, my father standing at the door of the Summer parlor, which opened on the garden, welcoming me with open arms, caressing and comforting me, and saying that "Clothes did not matter at all if I would only be his own dear little bride, and not cry."

But clothes did matter, as I knew too well in my feminine experience, and as nurse protested, "How should master know about clothes, poor dear soul, who had neither to make nor to mend, nor to starch nor to iron? Men, the wisest of them, always talked as if clothes grew upon children like fur upon kittens."

They mattered, indeed, so much to me, that I had never any difficulty at all in receiving the narrative of Genesis connecting clothes with the

fall rather than the creation of man, as a most rational explanation of the nature of things, being already quite convinced from my own history that they could never have been originally intended as essentials in any beneficent scheme of the universe.

Only, Piers and I used in after years frequently to lament that the primitive institution of skins had not been adhered to.

Also, I suspect, clothes had much to do with that next step which made so great a change in our lives.

I have little doubt it was a sense of his incapacity for contending with the difficulties springing, not from the characters of his children, but from their clothes, feminine and infantine, with all the feminine care and attendance incident thereunto, that induced him to place at the head of his house the discreet and sober-minded gentlewoman who became our stepmother; clothes, I mean, in the larger sense,—conventionalities, customs, proprieties.

The reign of Clothes certainly did not cease with my stepmother. Only the signification of the world extended. Conventionalities, customs, proprieties, all the ritual of life, these were her standard measures, her household gods, her sacred Scriptures, or at least her tradition of the elders, which brought them down to practice; her Talmud if not her Pentateuch. With most of us, I suppose, our practical commentaries are unwritten.

On the Upper Olympus, doubtless, with her as with others, safe enthroned the serene far-off orthodox divinities, but by the hearth were acknowledged two presiding powers, one deprecated as the root of mischief, and the other honored with daily incense and libation. Her evil genius was Enthusiasm; her protecting divinity, Moderation.

To understand the Bible or anything properly, she would have considered that every text should be underlined with "Let everything be done decently and in order," and "Let your moderation be known unto all men."

With her, sin was doing anything too vehemently; heresy, believing anything too intensely; justice between contending parties was thinking every one equally wrong; charity, thinking every one equally right; the Christian warfare an armed neutrality; truth the residuum after the extraction of all extreme opinions; paradise, the place where all exaggerated ideas and characters are either absent or kept quiet.

At least such was the impression she made on me in the exaggerations of my childish imagination; for hers was a moderation which always tempted me into extremes, and it is only later that I learned to be just to her. She was as kind as any one can be without sympathy, as just as any one can be without imagination. She adhered as faithfully to the golden rule, "As ye would that men should do to you, do ye also to them," as any one can do who has no conception

of the differences between men, between the "they" and the "you," no idea of the patient study of circumstance and character which the true fulfilling of the precept involves.

In later years, moreover, we grew to understand each other better; as she and I both learned, I trust, something from each other, and more from life.

And in earlier years, I can see now, if not the good she did me, at least something of the evils from which she kept me.

It is good for us all to have some ice in our lives. It makes the air fresher, and restrains the enthusiasm which is meant to enrich the summers and middle levels with living waters and life-giving soil, from overflowing too early in the spring time on the higher levels, and so evaporating in mists of sentiment, or being lost in marshes of vague good intention.

Much fond and foolish talk there was, no doubt, in the nursery, when it was announced that Mr. Danescombe, my father, was about to marry Miss Euphrasia Weston.

Faltering exhortations were addressed to me by nurse as to the duties of our new relationship to the good lady who was coming to be our "new mother;" congratulations whose compassionate tones made me interpret them into condolences. For children, like dogs, read speech as if it were music, by tones rather than by words.

The only words of her exhortations which

made any impression on me, were those terrible promises of a "new mother." To me they were what to a devout Jew might have been the promise of a "new God."

In those days the French words, vulgarized by bad nursery pronunciation into *papa* and *mamma*, which would be so intolerable if they were not hallowed to two or three generations by the lisps of baby lips, had not yet been introduced into England, or at least had not penetrated to our social level in our little country town. There was, therefore, no convenient intermediate conventional term, expressive rather of position than relationship.

And the sacred name, mother, was not, in my Protestant childhood, distributed in the liberal manner since the fashion among any benevolent ladies who undertake the charge of young girls, good or naughty. In those days women only became mothers through a mother's anguish and joy.

To me "mother" meant one only incomparable love, one only irreparable loss; love which had loved me, me as I was, not any goodness or beauty in me, not my clothes nor my behavior, but me, her little, helpless, longing, clinging Bride; loss which had left my childhood, consciously or unconsciously, one long empty craving, "feeling after if haply I might find" wings to brood over me, arms to fold me like hers.

But now nurse seemed to expect me to transfer.

that dear lost name in this easy way to an unknown quantity, as if it meant nothing, like a nonsense nursery rhyme; as if life meant nothing but a "make-believe" play with dolls.

I could not have done so even to an old doll. Yet to remonstrate with any one who could have had the want of perception to propose such a thing was, I instinctively felt, as useless as trying to explain the mysteries of property to Pluto.

I cried myself to sleep silently that night, in one of those unutterable agonies of childhood. Happily childish agonies do not drive sleep away!

And the next morning I awoke and began my vain tears again, but made no moan or complaint, until nurse finding I did not get on with my bread and milk, began one of her half-caressing half-querulous remonstrances.

"What ails the child? Miss Bride, you are getting quite beyond poor old nurse. And so no doubt others have thought. Maybe the new lady will manage better."

Then I broke out into one gasping sob, and said, "must I call the new lady mother?"

"Sure enough, child, sure enough! What would poor dear master say?"

"Did father say that?"

"Who would make so bold as to ask him? Never mind, poor lamb, never mind; what's the name? The *name's* nothing."

To me the name was unutterably much. But I was consoled by perceiving that it was plain

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nurse had no sentence on the matter from my father; and I secretly resolved to ask him myself.

To me the name was everything. To use it falsely was, I felt in some dim way, to bring a lie into my life, or rather to sap all significance out of the words falsehood and truth, to make all language, all sacred words and names lose their distinctive meaning and become mere interchangeable hollowness. That is to say, this is what I now know my instinctive revulsion meant.

The very next time that I sat on my father's knee, and could get my face well hidden on his breast, with desperate courage I began—

“Must I call her mother?”

His hands trembled as they stroked my hair, and his lips as he kissed me, and I could hear that his voice was half choked as he said—

“Who, little Bride? What does my darling mean?”

“The new lady,” I said, without lifting my head.

He put me down, and paced hastily up and down the room; and then he said, in what seemed to me a very cold and absent voice, “I will ask her.”

But then again suddenly he seized me in his arms and pressed me to his heart, and I felt his tears as he said—

“Little Bride, my darling little Bride, you are not afraid of me? I am only bringing some one home to take care of you and baby.”

And so he fully believed, my poor father. Bewildered by the advice of some, and the gossip of others, and the well-meant querulousness of nurse, and the various feminine and infantine comprehensibilities of baby and of me, he was bringing home a sage and sober-minded new lady who talked good English, which nurse did not, and was a good economist, which he was not, to preside over his household, his children, and himself, to provide us with costumes and catechisms, with clothes, intellectual, moral, and material.

I am not describing typical relationships or characters. Relationships and characters are not to be so easily classified into types. Second marriages are as different as first marriages, and step-mothers as different as mothers or mothers-in-law. But our country town was not a normal community, nor was mine a normal life. And this was my experience.

The next day my father kissed me very tenderly when I went to bed, and said gravely,

"Miss Weston does not wish my little Bride to call her anything that is not strictly correct. You may call her Mrs. Danescombe. She would like it."

I felt so relieved, and so grateful to the new lady for the relief, I could almost have welcomed her. I suppose a dim hope came to me that she would after all understand me.

A week after that my father went away for a day or two. In those days wedding journeys had

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not been introduced. He was married in the neighboring town where Miss Euphrasia was staying, and the next day he brought her home, and we were summoned to greet her.

She stooped down graciously and gave me her cheek to kiss; and she spoke in a high-pitched caressing tone, supposed to suit the infantine taste, to Piers, and made a movement as if she would have taken him in her arms and kissed him. But she seemed to find her dress a little in the way. She wore a drooping large-brimmed hat with a feather, and ruffles and lappets and laces in various places, and I believe she felt shy with the child, which he with a child's instinct of course perceived; and concluding she had no right of possession in him, he turned from her with a little pout, and a little quiver of the lips, to me.

I saw her color rise a little, and I felt rather than saw a slight uneasy frown on my father's face. I knew that things were going wrong; and then all at once something motherly seemed to wake up in my own heart (I do not know what else to call it), a dim feeling that I was not there to be taken care of, but to take care of other people, of Piers and father, and even in some sense of Mrs. Danescombe. And I folded my arms around my little brother, and stretched out his little hands and mine together towards her, and then I seemed to feel father's frown relax to a smile, and in a moment we were both caught up and half smothered in his arms, and enveloped in

a comprehensive embrace in which Mrs. Danescombe was in some way involved.

Then afterwards father hastily left the room, as if he had finished the reconciliation scene in a play, his sanguine nature quite satisfied that all was going right; and Mrs. Danescombe, after bestowing a toy on Piers, and a new London doll on me, was quite content to leave Piers to my guardianship, while she smoothed herself down before the small cut Venetian glass in the oaken frame over the old high-carved chimney-piece.

And I remember sitting in the window-seat with my arms around Piers, altogether grave and happy with that new feeling of motherliness. We did not touch our toys, but sat gravely conversing; so that when father returned, cheerily rubbing his hands, he looked a little disappointed to see the new gifts neglected, and said to me half reproachfully:

“Does not my little Bride care for her beautiful new doll?”

How could I? I, who was feeling wise and matronly, as if I were the mother of the human race, and had the world on my shoulders, himself included!

Besides, what strange ideas he must have about dolls! Was a new doll to be made acquaintance with, and taken to one's heart in a moment?

However, I took up the doll, and began to behave to it with great politeness.

And Mrs. Danescombe drew near us, and

made sundry efforts to "amuse" Piers by jerking the angular wooden puppet with which she had presented him, by means of internal strings, into various mountebank attitudes, which were intended to be funny.

I remember now the sense of grave wonder and pity with which I contemplated these futile attempts at entertainment, whilst Piers continued to gaze steadily into her face with serious, undeluded eyes, evidently concluding that she was quite too old to play, and that the whole thing was a piece of very ineffective dramatic performance. I think the courteous complaisance with which little children receive our imbecile attempts to amuse them very remarkable; they who are never taken in, who are themselves actors of the first class, by instinct, living in a perpetually varied drama as gloriously independent of vulgar necessities of scene-painting as an Athenian audience; they to whom any few square feet of earth where they can be let alone are an imperial amphitheatre, and two chairs a hippodrome, and a heap of chips a fortune of theatrical properties.

Piers, I am sure, took in the whole futility and absurdity of the situation; but he also understood that the new lady meant well, and, like the little king he was, from time to time he vouchsafed her the patronage of a smile, and even condescended to imitate her movements with the puppet.

Little king that he was! My little king, whom

I would serve with all that I was and had, and guard and cherish, and pet and honor, and keep the world warm for; and be his interpreter, his queen, his slave!

That night I asked nurse if I might say my prayers beside baby's crib, instead of at her knee. The wonderful birds and flowers on her chintz petticoat had always been a hindrance to me, and also her snuff-box, and I so often had to begin all over again.

At first she seemed rather hurt at the request; but then I began to cry, and pleaded that baby looked so dear; and she consented, and called us "Poor innocents!" and began to cry, too.

Piers was asleep, one little arm under his round cheek, flushed as it was with sleep, and the other little fat hand clenched like a wrestler's, and thrust out over the edge of his cot. My prayers must have been a mysterious ritual to me, scarcely "in a tongue understood of the people." No one had ever explained them to me. I do not remember ever expecting anything to come of them, except some vague harm to some one if they were left out. What the words were at that time I cannot even tell. There were no Sunday-schools in our town; nurse was very ignorant, and I am sure she could not read. Not improbably they were the Lord's Prayer and the invocation to the four Evangelists, long afterwards not disused in the district. And my theology was, doubtless, neither definite nor broad. It

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certainly, however, included a belief in something that could hurt Piers and me, especially if we were naughty, and in the dark.

But mysterious, indeed, are all little children's prayers!

Who knows the "tongues of angels?" Who knows the mystic, unutterable communion there may be between the Father of spirits and those little ones whose angels always see His face!

"Exiled children of Eve," little royal strangers, whose wondering eyes have not yet narrowed their range to our mortal vision,—whose free fearless, questioning thought is not yet fettered to our mortal speech,—who knows the delicate, aerial touches that come and go along those strings the world's rude hands have not yet swept? Who knows the moment when the Father who fell on the prodigal's neck and kissed him, clasps to his heart those little ones who have not yet wilfully left the Father's house? What kisses, what consecrating touches are theirs?

Who knows, since God is love,—not primarily the Infinite Mind that speaks to us by works or thoughts, but the Father's heart that speaks to us by loving,—what divine touches, real as a mother's kisses, tender as the soft pressure of her arms, rest on the little ones?

Not only on a few score of exceptional little Galilean children were the sacred Hands laid, in those three years which made visible the eternity of unseen Divine love.

Nor is it only a few Jewish fishermen who have understood the love of the Master for little children,—the babes,—the creatures we call speechless and unconscious.

Is it not rather *we* who have become blind, and speechless, and unconscious? blinded by the countless small glitterings, and the countless vain prying of this world; robbed of heavenly utterance by its empty chatterings and bitter contentions; made unconscious by its drowsy charms, of the realities of life and death, and love, of the capacities for sorrow and joy, deeper even than sorrow around and within us still, whether we know it or not,—as they are around the little children we think unaware of them?

Who knows how little the wisest of us know, or how much the simplest?

I know not, indeed, what passed in my heart that night, or what words passed my lips. But I remember my cheek resting on my little brother's cheek, and the dear little hand unclenching itself and resting on me, and the sleepy eyes opening for a moment on mine, and the parted lips sleepily lisping my name.

And I remember lying down in my own little bed afterwards, so still and happy, and warm at heart, feeling not so much that I was brooded over, or needed it, as that some kind of wings had unfolded in me, and were brooding over Piers, and keeping him safe and warm.

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That was, as far as I can remember, the way
 God began to teach me; by filling my heart with
 that great love which was just a little feeble image
 of His.

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CHAPTER III.

IN these days to be Insular is a reproach which most people repel with indignation. Or if any one admits it with a contemptuous pity as but too applicable, in many respects, to our country, it is always with the tacit understanding that he himself is contemplating that narrow and common-place little community from some wide continent of experience and thought whence the island and its interest assume their duly diminutive proportions.

In my early days people gloried in being Insular. The "right little, tight little island" was delighted in with something of the same kind of attachment an old sailor used to feel for his ship—knowing well her weak points, but knowing also what storms she had weathered, what broadsides she had gallantly stood, and fearless as to the tempests and battles to come; a patriotism not at all tending to anything international or cosmopolitan, but combative, exclusive, Insular to the core.

The Americans were still our "colonies" across the seas; we were fresh from a hot fight with

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them, in which our national temper had not been sweetened by our having been in the wrong and having been beaten. On most of us the idea had scarcely dawned that they were a Nation at all. They were "our plantations," a branch of the old trunk, vigorous certainly, but very knotty, and gnarled; the vigor of course belonging to the stock they came of, and, (perhaps it must be admitted,) the knots and gnarls also. The echoes of a hundred years before, moreover, had scarcely died away, and in some Englishmen resentment against "rebels" who had disowned the king, was blended with a dim disapproval of Dissenters who had tried to upset the Church, and were believed for the most part to be Puritans (whatever that meant), and therefore, naturally, to speak through their noses.

Again, the French were "a nation of dancing-masters," who, with all their misplaced agility, could not climb the shrouds of a ship. Had not their own Voltaire lately called them a compound of monkey and tiger?

The "German States"—(Germany did not exist, even in popular ballads)—were too remote, and too unknown and varying a quantity to have any definite portrait.

Spain loomed mistily on us, gigantic and yet shadowy, with the old glooms and glories of her past playing fitfully around her, her palaces and prisons still echoing as we believed with groans, under an Inquisition not yet dead; her fleets still

recalling the Armada; yet through all, a ghastliness and ghostliness, as if the whole structure were held together by old spells grown feeble, and at a bold touch or word might crumble helplessly away.

Insular! we thank God in our hymns for it; islanded safe, in our green security, with our glorious constitution in Church and State, our king, our church, our "wooden walls;" a second "chosen people," better preserved than the first from the various idolatrous nations around. If Israel of old had been guarded by the Straits of Dover and the German Ocean, who could say that things might not have ended differently? But no doubt it was to be. Israel was a stiff-necked people, and we, on the contrary, were always improving ourselves and our constitution.

Of course even then there were a few croakers, who might have repeated Oliver Cromwell's old exhortation, "You glory in that ditch which guards your shores; I tell you your ditch will be no defence to you unless you reform yourselves;" and a few profane wits infected with the levity of France, who did not regard even the Thirty-nine Articles, or our most religious and gracious king as unassailable; and a few democrats who did not consider even our glorious constitution final. But for the most part, even if, when comparing class with class amongst us, we now and then recognized reluctantly that there was some unequal pressure, that there might be some corners which were not

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quite paradise; when, on the other hand, we com-
pared ourselves with the rest of the world, our
self-appreciation was restored, and we became once
more sensible of our privileges.

Moreover, not only were we one island, we
were in another sense an archipelago of islands.

Not only was England thus islanded from the
world. Every country town was islanded from
the rest—was a living community in itself, with
its own local history and government, local glories
and wrongs, its local circle of families established
there for generations; not certainly without their
mutual jealousies and rivalries, but belonging to
each other by a real and recognized relationship.

And still farther within this inner island was
an innermost, like the ball within ball of the In-
dian puzzle.

In those days every Englishman's "house was
his castle," in a more peculiar sense, or at least in
a greater variety of senses, than now. A house
belonging to a family, was part of its complex
existence, more in the same sense that a man's
body is part of his complex self. It grew with a
family growth, flourished with the family prosper-
ity, decayed with the family decay; and as we die
out of our bodies and leave them, so, with a mortal-
ity in one sense more pathetic because apparently
not inevitable, a family might, by misfortune,
folly, failure of succession, die out of the old family
house. A house, therefore, had quite a different
significance; it had family histories stamped into

it, growing out of it; it had features, characteristics, a life of its own.

There are stately mansions of our great families, to which something of this character attaches still. The greatness and glory of the great family is built into them, and they stand.

But, then, this family character attached to countless unpretending English houses, and this not only in country places to fine old manorial halls, or homely farmsteads, but in the streets of every town. We all of us can recognize those old houses still. They look out on us with pathetic, or quaint and humorous human faces; the humanity that has grown with them and around them, and from them for generations, cannot die out of them. And when we see them left stranded forlorn in some featureless row of windows and doors such as human creatures now swarm and are fed in, until the next hive is ready, we welcome them or compassionate them, not as buildings but as friends.

In such houses were the families of my childhood islanded in the island of our little country town, in the island of our England.

I smile sometimes a little when I see people endeavoring now æsthetically to restore this lost sacredness of houses by means of Elizabethan windows and fireplaces and mediæval texts, and family arms on doors and walls. I think the rush of nineteenth-century life will be too strong for them. Will their children live where they lived,

or love what they loved, or think as they thought.

If it is hard to make a lost religion or a lost architecture live again, I think it is harder still to revive a dead habit of social life. But our grandchildren will see.

It is this inmost island of home that I must first picture, before the scene widens to the town and the country in which it was enclosed. All true geography, all geography which would lead to the knowledge, not of names, but of things, must begin, not with the elliptic and the equator, but with the pond in the farm-yard.

The living germ of our town was a Benedictine abbey, one of the finest and earliest in the kingdom. This abbey had been built by the side of a clear rocky river, where the hills through which it cut its way from the moorland opened out so as to leave a little level of rich meadow-land.

Around the church and the conventual buildings, the two solid stone bridges, and the weir with its deep pool and salmon-trap, whence the town Abbott's Weir had its name, the houses of the town clustered, gradually stretching back over the strip of level to the hills.

Our house had thus been driven to the foot of the steep slope, and had been constrained to make the best of it by all kinds of eccentric devices, climbing here and delving there, until it possessed scarcely two rooms on the same level; to children perhaps the most delightful plan on which a house could be constructed. Its very existence was a

continual victory over adverse circumstances, and tended to communicate to its inhabitants, according to the material on which the stamp was impressed, a character either militant and adventurous, or easy and imperturbable, conquering circumstances by resolutely surmounting it, or by accepting its ups and downs as inevitable, and making them part of its own constitution.

The entrance was by a Tudor arch into a broad passage. On the right was a large wainscotted room with a stone floor and one long, low mulioned window with a long, deep window-seat. In this room, as a rule, the family breakfasted, dined, and had all its family meals—all that were not connected with ceremonial and extended to strangers. This also was the nearest approach Piers and I had to a day nursery or play-room, our great resource on any wet days which drove us from our natural territory in the garden; a room into which, even after the *régime* of my stepmother, Pluto was admitted, and my father's favorite pointer and setter, and that long succession of my kittens which came to such a variety of tragical ends. Mrs. Danescombe's cat, which never came to misfortune of any kind, sleek, impenetrable, demure, resided in the Oak parlor, approached by a small flight of steps on the opposite side of the passage. Into this we only went by invitation; but that cat had the *entrée*. A most evil and hypocritical creature we considered her; an embodiment of all the dark side of cat

nature—malignantly breaking all the china and gluttonously imbibing all the dainties, on account of which my luckless kittens suffered, and then sitting upright on the parlor window-seat winking superciliously at all the world.

There were few middle tints in the portraits of our childhood, and among the most Rembrandt-like that comes back to me is the image of my stepmother's cat. All that Puritan meant to the most prejudiced of Cavaliers, or Tartuffe to the most anti-ecclesiastical of Frenchmen, that sleek, stealthy, whiskered black-and-white cat meant to me. It scarcely ever purred. We believed it could not pur; its conscience was too laden with crime. Nor do I remember its ever playing, except once or twice in a murderous way with a fly on the window-pane when it thought no one was looking. Its name was Mignonette, and to this day I can scarcely do justice to the sweetness of the little flower whose appellation it polluted.

The Oak parlor had a very different social rank from the Stone parlor. It was my stepmother's especial domain. It was seldom entered by any one until the afternoon, being the scene of leisurely employment and sober amusement, and of all social entertainments not of the stateliest kind. There Mrs. Danescombe embroidered muslin and made lace, or took snuff and played cards with chosen associates, always for small stakes; and there were solemnly handed around trays with small glasses of liqueurs or cordials, or in aftertimes

with fainty small cups of tea. No uproarious merriment was ever heard within those precincts; nothing stronger than tea or cordials was ever sipped therein. Seldom did masculine foot invade them. If my father wished to entertain his friends with solid British viands and vigorous British beverages, recourse was had to the Stone parlor, where also we gathered in the winter evenings, on oaken settles or footstools around the great old chimney, with its dogs and log-fires. Echoes of Christmas merriment and of children's laughter hung around those old walls; but the wainscoting of the Oak parlor could never have reported anything more sonorous than the murmured gossip of the card-table, unless some of the players, by any series of other people's mistakes or their own mischances, lost their game and their tempers, and broke out of the decorum of the place into the hard realities of unfairly lost shillings and sixpences.

There were two sacred things to me, however, in the room.

In the recesses on each side of the high oaken chimney-piece with its carved looking-glass, hung portraits of my father and of my own mother in the dresses they wore just after they were married; he with a bag-wig, hand ruffles, and a sword, and elaborate shoebuckles, which certainly did not recall his every-day appearance; she with powdered hair brushed over a high cushion, a little hat stuck coquettishly on the top of it, a blue satin

bedice and train, and brocaded petticoat, with a large bouquet in the hand laid on her lap, and a shepherd's crook in the other. At her feet was a lamb wreathed with flowers, looking wistfully up in her face. The native Vandyke or Sir Joshua had evidently a confused Ideal compounded of the pastoral and the courtly, and was very familiar with neither. There must have been something very invincible in the character of my mother's face to penetrate as it did at once through the false idealism and the imperfect execution of the painter. For it was evidently a likeness. Underneath a fair, finely-arched brow were distinct though delicate eyebrows, visible far back at the side of the forehead, and overshadowing very large, soft, dark-grey eyes. There was much depth in the eyes, but no dreaminess. They evidently *saw*—saw the lamb looking up into them, and much besides. The mouth was firm and grave, the pose of the whole figure was at once easy and commanding; the small hand, wooden as the painting was, held the crook with a real grasp. You felt instinctively that the visible lamb and the imaginary flock were well cared for under such guardianship. Oh! with what longing I used to look at that lamb lying so safe at her feet.

She sat before me, a type not so much of fond, passionate motherliness, as of tender, wise, protective motherhood; not so much of the mother's bliss, as of the mother's care; not like one of Murillo's girl Madonnas dreaming over a new delight,

but like one of the earlier Italian school, grave with the very weight of the mother's joy, and with the destinies of the life with which her own was bound up.

For had I not the memory of her touch and her kiss to interpret the portrait? Had not those hands pressed me to her heart, and did I not know how those grave lips could part and smile?

Underneath this portrait stood a little table with a well in it, containing, I knew, my mother's work, and especially one dainty little frill of a baby's cap, unfinished, with her needle in it. Upon it was placed her ebony spinning-wheel. Nurse used to dust it reverently every morning; and often I stole in with her, and then, when nurse was not looking, I used to reach up to the picture and softly kiss its hands.

Every afternoon, when there was no company, I spent an hour in that room with Mrs. Danescombe and the hypocritical cat, learning to sew. But at those times I did not dare to look much at my beloved picture; because, being frequently in trouble with my work, I was afraid, if I caught sight of that lamb and of that dear face, a terrible rush of the feeling of motherlessness would come over me, and I should cry. For, once, when I had been very unsuccessful with my sewing, and had had to unpick it several times, this had happened, and Mrs. Danescombe had asked what I was crying for; and I, stretching out my arms to the picture, and sobbing out something about my "mother,"

my stepmother had replied in an even, undisturbed voice—one of her maxims being that “a gentlewoman never degrades reproof into scolding by raising her voice”—

“Bridget, that is something I cannot permit. When little girls lose their tempers over their tasks, I cannot suffer them to deceive themselves, by calling their naughty passions sensibility. You have many faults; but I did hope you were a truthful child. Never let me hear you speak in that way again.”

And that was a reproach I never did incur again. How it burnt into my heart! Not only by the injustice, but the justice in it. For I was a very truthful child; and it was not only the dull pain of being misunderstood that hurt me; it was the terrible fear that my stepmother, after all, had understood me better than I understood myself. Was she not older, wiser, my father's chosen ruler for us—set over us by all the mysterious powers whence authority springs—authority against which I had not a thought of rebelling? And had I not been in something very like a naughty temper, writing down very hard things against my stepmother, and the bitter fate of little girls in general who had to learn sewing; indeed, even against the nature of things which involved clothes that had to be sewn? And was it possible that I had desecrated that love to my mother, and the memory of her love, by making it an excuse even to myself for being cross and angry?

I certainly had sometimes, underneath these perplexities and self-accusations, a dim sense, now and then flashing into a passionate persuasion that it was *not* all my fault. But then, again, I reproached myself again for this.

If the things in Mrs. Danescombe's character which jarred against mine had been angles, the conflict would have been less harassing. But in her there were no angles; there was nothing to lay hold of; it was simply coldness, smoothness of surface, hard polish, and impenetrability; and what "case" could be made out of these? She never scolded, or threatened, or punished. She simply reprov'd. Her severest discipline was a distant politeness and a peculiar way of calling me "Bridget." What was there cruel in that? Yet it froze into my bones. And there were times when her mere presence was to me a prison worse than the darkest of the dark holes nurse threatened us with. It was not until long afterwards I learned why.

Her government was based on suspicion. She was not theological in any sense; she had no extreme theories of the depravity of human nature. But she had a deep-seated conviction that every man and woman, and more especially every servant and little child, was more likely to do wrong than right, and more likely to do wrong from the worst motives than the best.

Combined with this, or perhaps flowing from it, was a remarkable keenness of perception as to

any defect or mistake, in anything or person, from a speck of dust or rust on the furniture, to the smallest solecism in dress or manners, or the least excess or defect in demeanor.

Therefore she never praised ; partly because she thought commendation nourished vanity, and partly because in the best work she always detected some petty blemish, not imaginary, but real ; yet, however small, sufficient to distract her attention from all that was good on it.

It would have been a difficult atmosphere to *grow* in, but that we had a large space of life free from her inspection, and an element of positive freedom, warmth, and breadth in my father, which, I suppose, would scarcely have done alone.

Only I have often thought that my mother's character would have been the supplementary opposite, as my stepmother's was the neutralizing contrary of my father. My mother's character would have drawn out and filled up all that was highest and best in his. Mrs. Danescombe merely repressed and neutralized. With her he was, perhaps, restrained from doing or saying some things better not done or said ; with my mother he would have become all he might have been. Both made some kind of harmony, but with my mother all the life would have been larger, richer, fuller.





CHAPTER IV.

AT the end of the passage was a wide staircase with black oak bannisters, which led to the Best parlor, an apartment provided with furniture altogether

“ too bright and good
For common nature’s daily food ; ” .

where from week to week the amber damask curtains and tapestried chairs were pinned into thick coverings, and the carpet was rolled up on one side, and the gilded sconces on the frame of the small round looking-glass were veiled, and the Venetian-blinds were closely shut.

This was the inmost sanctuary of Mrs. Danecombe’s domain. In my mother’s time it had not been furnished, and I had faint memories of its having been abandoned to us as a play-room ; of wild games there with my father in winter twilight, and of delicious terrors, half-real, half-feigned, as he sprang on us from dim corners with awful growls and roars, in the characters of lion or bear. Moreover, outside there was a balcony which was

a delightfully romantic place, whence the world assumed quite a new aspect, a border-land which was neither indoors nor out-of-doors, where all the life of the street moved before us in a continual procession, better than any picture-book.

But now all this was changed, and we only entered the room at all on the very highest days, in our very best, and therefore most harassing, clothes; and would as soon have thought of venturing into the pulpit of the church as into the balcony.

Behind this were the principal bedrooms, looking on an inner court, and then a flight of rather ladder-like stairs leading to the first platform of the garden, on which opened the Summer parlor. This was my father's especial retreat, the corner of the house which he succeeded in defending against all the assaults of Order, and keeping freely open to us.

In this room we had the rights of citizenship to the fullest extent; everything was open to us; and, in consequence, everything was sacred to us. We were trusted, and believed in; and to have hurt anything my father cared about would have been to Piers or me, naturally, the direst of misfortunes.

My father's principles of government and views of life were the very contrary of Mrs. Dancombe's. His expectation was that every one belonging to him would do right, and everything would go right; and if, contrary to expectation, any one

did wrong, or anything went wrong, he was wont to attribute it to the best possible motives, and resume his sanguine anticipations, unbroken. Not, perhaps, an altogether adequate principle for government on any large scale. Although I remember being smitten with a far keener repentance by being misunderstood by him on the too favorable side than all my step-mother's keen detection and exposure of the dark ever brought to me.

The real defect in his rule was not, I think, hoping or trusting too much, but suffering his sanguine temperament to dim his sight. To see everything wrong, and yet hope everything good, is higher, I suppose, because truer.

And it was there, I fancy, my mother would have helped him. The optimism which revolted to an extreme against Mrs. Danescombe's suspicions would have been braced and corrected by my mother's loving truthfulness.

That room was a world of interest to us. There were marvellous models of machines in it (those were the days of Watt and Arkwright), balls of twine, fishing tackle, carpenter's tools, a turning lathe, pieces of various woods—Spanish mahogany and cedar, curious knots and blocks of oak, walnut, and various native woods; for my father delighted in experimenting, and had a theory that half the use that might be was not made of our own English produce. The marred work, and the pieces with unconquerable flaws were our Jetsun and

Flotzum; but the greatest pleasure of all was to be allowed to stand by and watch while he was at work.

To watch the real work of grown people was and endless interest to us children. It was their amusements, and still more their attempts to amuse us, which seemed to us so dull. And by mistaken benevolence of that kind we in our childhood were not much oppressed.

My father having much "of the child's heart in his breast," took us quite naturally into his confidence, and enjoyed our sympathy in his projects as much as we did his in ours. Mrs. Danescombe, probably never having known childhood herself, capable of having existed from infancy like the children in old-fashioned family pictures, erect from morning till night in a cushion and hoop, never thought of us as helpless creatures that had to be made happy, but as fallen and refractory creatures that had to be kept down, and brought up, and if possible kept tidy. Thus no one took any trouble to amuse us. And accordingly we were endlessly amused.

Never, moreover, were children happier in the scenery of their childhood, than we in that dear old up-and-down house and garden.

The garden consisted of a succession of platforms and terraces, connected by flights of steps, or by steep slopes. The first of these was opposite the Summer parlor. Round it was a border of flowers—roses, pansies, marigolds, love-lies-bleed

ing, hen and chicken daisies, sunflowers, holly hocks, all Lord Bacon's catalogue. In one corner, hollowed out of the rocky hillside, was a dropping well, where the slow falling of the drops, one by one, we saw not whence, into the dark cool water below, mysteriously echoing from the sides, made delicious music for us. The entrance was draped by tufts and fringes of ferns of the richest green and the most delicate forms; beneath it, under the rock, was a bed of the sweetest lilies of the valley. It was only entered in the early morning by a few stray sunbeams, and of these scarcely one reached the opposite rock, and none ever penetrated into the clefts and corners. My father told us it was natural, and carved out by the little drops themselves dropping through hundreds, perhaps thousands of years. They had begun their chimes, he said, long before any had sounded from the old church-tower.

Thus to us that little melodious well was like the threshold of a thousand delightful mysteries. Where did those melodious drops start from? From what dark hidden pools under the hills? From what bright floating clouds in the sky? Whose pitchers had they filled,—what little children had they sung to before? What were they saying to us, or wanting to say? Wistful Undines and Nixen longing to speak to us: wise busy gnomes at work for ages, knowing thousands of secrets they would not tell but we would give anything to hear; all the wild mythology of

mountain and water sprites; all that "nurse" nature would say to us and cannot; all that we would learn from her but cannot; dim reflections of our personality on material things; dim shinings through and prismatic refractions of the personality beyond and within; all this, and unutterably more, murmured to us through that dropping well. Children of the mystic and humorous North, did we need legends Scandinavian or Teutonic to tell us what a strange compound the world was?

Was there not, moreover, from time to time, in that very well, an apparition of a gigantic wide-mouthed frog, who in the midst of all that melancholy and mystic music, and those delicate ferns, and those sweet lilies of the valley, would croak and hop, and be as self-satisfied, and as entirely an embodied joke, as any of the quaintest dwarfs Grimm ever disinterred or Cruikshank ever drew? The whole mysterious animal-world lay open to us between our sympathetic dog Pluto and that supercilious impenetrable frog.

When, years afterwards, we saw those German stories, we felt we had known them all our lives.

For I confess I am tempted to count it among the blessings of our childhood that we had no children's books at all.

No doubt there were children's books in our days; but the allowance was scanty, and what there was did not reach us. If we had been provided with any, they would, no doubt, have been

heavily weighted with morals, and would have been duller to us than our lessons. But happily we were not. Our lesson-books were good, honest lesson-books—my first was a horn-book. Our alphabets had no pictures; there was no sugar on the margin of our draughts of learning. We took them, certainly not without tears. But if to us “books” meant the antithesis of “play,” and we cried over them and their consequences very heartily and very frequently, at least we did not fall into the far more desperate fate of yawning over our play, and listless by requesting to be instructed how to amuse ourselves.

In our days the age of wise children’s literature had not commenced. For us Rosamond and Frank, Harry and Lucy did not exist. They may, indeed, have dawned on some of the higher social summits, but certainly did not penetrate to Abbot’s Weir. Still less, of course, was there anything for us of the nature of the reactionary literature of nonsense, clever or inane, which succeeded that era of supernatural good sense.

What nursery nonsense we had was quite genuine, with no perplexing parodies of sense, or half glimmerings of sense treacherously lurking beneath the surface. For us Little Jack Horner sat in his corner, and took out his plum, and congratulated himself (not as one might have expected, on his good fortune, but on his virtue,) in the most literal way, without any allegorical construction. No suspicions of satire, or of the signs of the

zodiac, marred our enjoyment of the confusion which ensued when "the cat had the fiddle, the cow jumped over the moon, the little dog laughed to see the sport, and the dish ran away with the spoon."

For us Mother Hubbard's agreeable disappointment at the futility of her dog's coffin was always fresh; the funeral rites of Jenny Wren could be repeated to any extent; the Babes in the Wood and Little Red Riding Hood were alternately dreaded and desired as we felt equal or not to the luxuries of tragedy. But between those ancient histories and the literature of our elders there was no intervening world of little boys and girls, exemplarily good, supernaturally naughty, sentimental, religious, or scientific.

The world of grown people's work—of animals and flowers, the garden, and the timber-yard, and the iron foundry were our books. And for us there was no idle reading.

But perhaps we were exceptionally happy in these respects. My father himself was our Miss Edgeworth, almost always ready to explain to us his own work, or to enter with such serious interest as we felt its due into ours.

And, of course, it is not every child who can be free of a timber-yard and a foundry as we were.

For I have not yet told half the delights of our garden.

By the side of the dropping well was a door,

better to us than any underground steps of Aladdin, leading through a short tunnel, ending in a flight of stairs cut in the rock, to the second garden, which was a steep slope crowned at the top with a terrace and arbor.

This was of peculiar interest to us, because it was one of the pages of our own original illustrated copy of the Pilgrim's Progress, being obviously the Hill Difficulty, the arbor where Christian lost his roll, and also in another aspect the Palace Beautiful, and the Delectable Mountains whence the pilgrims could survey the land.

Could not we survey the whole land from that summit?

Below us lay the slate roofs of the town, tier below tier, the two bridges and the river; and opposite was the fine old grey tower of the church, with its pinnacles standing out against the wooded hillsides, whilst above stretched the sweeping curves and sharp angles of the granite Tors, the moorland hills, whence the river flowed, purple and golden, with crisp lights and shadows, or blue and soft and far away, "the everlasting hills."

This, therefore, was one of our usual haunts on Sunday afternoons.

In the side wall of this garden was another door, and beyond it an orchard, and beyond that a great free range of fields called the Leas, and at the top of this a channel of water called the Leat, which was detached higher up from the river, and

fell at one end of the Leas in a cascade which turned the large water-wheel of the iron foundry. At the other end of this field was the timber-yard, and the foundry and the timber-yard were among the chief scenes of my father's work and of our play.

In those days it was the general custom for men of business to live near their work. Now, scarcely even the smaller shopkeepers live over their shops; and not only great cities but country towns are fringed with their suburbs of villas. Then, even large merchants lived near their warehouses, and if, as we did, they possessed a farm, it was a genuine farm, in the real country, where men and women did their real work; and if things were fair to see, it was because it was their nature, not because they were put there to be seen. I suppose there is gain in the change. People breathe better air, at least physically; of the moral atmosphere I am not so sure. It may be good to escape from the cares of business to vineries and conservatories and geranium beds; it is certainly better than to be buried, body and soul, in business; but to ennoble business is even better than to escape from it. All work must be degraded and must degrade, the chief object of which is to earn the means to do no work. The highest art may certainly in that way be degraded into a trade; and I think there are few manufactures or trades which may not, on the other hand, be raised into art.

At least it was so with my father. That tim-

ber-yard and that foundry were to him, and through him to us, outlets into the world of knowledge and of work.

Into the interior of the foundry we were not permitted to enter except under his protection.

My chief associations with that were a sense of the wonder-working powers of water and of fire.

It was, indeed, a perpetual fairy tale to see those creatures which we knew as fantastic dwarfs, or melodious melancholy nymphs, or dancing sprites, when they worked at their own wild will in the dropping well, or around the great logs on the hearth of the Stone parlor, transformed into steadfast and irresistible giants by the pressure of the steady will of man.

For thousands of years the slow-dropping water had been at work, and had carved out to the sound of its own singing that strange hollow in the rocky hills, with its grotesque angles and dim clefts; and now at last the great water-wheel was set to direct it; and patiently and willingly the mighty creature, rising to its full strength, turned the great machine round and round, making, by its own unconquerable beauty, the loveliest sparkling cascades and showers at every turn. And out of this combined power of water and man came harrows, and spades, and seythes; and pots, and pans, and kettles, and all kinds of fairy household gifts to make our work easier and our homes pleasanter. Were not the swift, flashing waters, careering with their

rush of rapid music over the wheel, as pleasant to see and hear as when dropping into the well? And were not scythes, and even kettles, as poetical things to make as caves?—the fireside and the reaping field being surely as sacred as the rocky hillside and the heathery moors?

I have always, however, been rather glad, as far as the lessons and associations of childhood went, that our machinery was worked by the separate powers of fire and water, and not by these powers combined in the more prosaic form of steam.

There was a large foundry not fifty miles from us, worked by steam, before we were born. And at the great engine factory of Bolton and Watt, many years before, my father used to tell how Mr. Bolton showed Dr. Johnson round, and said to him, "Sir, we sell here the thing all men are in search of—Power."

We lived in the days of the birth and infancy of many things which have since grown to gigantic powers and overspread the world.

Our childhood was passed in one of the great dawns of history. The world was awake and stirring around us in every direction—machinery, politics, religion—and my father was a man awake to every throb of the busy life around him.

The great steam-power was already in the world, and through the busy brains of Watt, Cartwright, and Arkwright, was feeling after its work in railroads, steamboats and power-looms. But,

happily for us, our moorland river did the work for us; and instead of pistons and cranks, and close oily rooms, we had our gigantic water-wheel and the cascade which rushed over it from the hill.

Then, the pictures and parables enacted for us on the great casting-days, when we were taken to see the molten metal flow out of the furnace into the moulds of sand; the Rembrandt-like groups of men, with blackened, illumined faces, shovelling out the liquid fire as if they had been agents in some fiery horrors of Dante's *Inferno*; the power of heat in that red cave of fire, raging at its roof into fierce white flames, which always made me think of Nebuchadnezzar's fiery furnace, and clasp tight my father's hand and Piers', lest they should be burned up like the wicked accusers.

I used to wonder how the three children and that "Fourth" looked in the midst of the flames; not black, I was sure, like old Reuben Pengelly, the furnace-man; but beautiful and calm, and fresh and white, like a very bright, soft moon in the midst of the angry glare.

Yet old Reuben himself was very dear to us children. He had lost a little boy about the age of Piers, and he had always a very tender feeling to Piers, partly because the child, looking, no doubt, from his blackened face and muscular bare neck to his kind eyes, had always had such trust in him, and would have gone in his arms to the mouth of the furnace. Reuben's delight on Sunday, when he had his clean washed face and his

best coat on, was to carry Piers in his arms about the silent foundry-yard, among the stationary wheels and hammers, and to sing us Methodist hymns; for he was a man of a strong, fervent piety, such as fitted his rough work and his muscular frame; and it was from him I first remember hearing the story of the three children in the furnace. To Reuben the Bible was the written part of a continuous living history, unwritten; and he told us how that Fourth, "who made the flames as soft as morning dews to them, was with him, old Reuben Pengelly, as really as with them, and with us little ones too." And I used often to gaze into the depths of that burning haze in a vague hope of finding something marvellous there.

All the men knew us, not as angelic benefactors descending on them now and then on festival occasions, but as little creatures they had some kind of tender right in; "master's," and also, therefore, "theirs." And we knew the inside of many of their homes, not merely by religious or benevolent visits, but naturally, as our *neighbors*—as people who had known, and loved, and served us and ours before we had known them.

There is incalculably much in that tie of neighborhood between rich and poor, employer and employed. The mere daily natural crossing of our paths is something; the familiarity with each other's faces and dwellings, and the countless kindnesses that may spring out of it, are infinitely more. Our Lord knew us well when He said,

not "Ye shall love mankind as yourselves," but "Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself." We often read it the other way. But the meaning is quite different.

And it often seems to me that half the social problems which beset us arise from the rich and poor having ceased in so many instances to be neighbors. What is half at least of our charitable machinery, but an ineffective and clumsy effort to replace the countless little interchanges of mutual good-will and service, the countless healthful, mutually sustaining intertwinings of life and love, which are involved in the simple fact of living within sight of each other.

The timber-yard, however, was Piers' and my most constant resource and delight; our gymnasium, our race-course, the dockyard of our navies.

Thence also the histories my father told us made a broad channel on which our imaginations sailed away to the various northern and southern lands, where the great bare timbers over which we sprang had grown.

When we were tired we used to sit on these trunks, and Piers would listen to any extent whilst I reproduced to him narratives of bears and wolves which had crept stealthily like cats over the snows after their prey, or howled and growled among the stems of these Norway pines.

We must have been rather sensational and gloomy in our tastes, for these bear and wolf-stories were always more popular with us than

those of the garlanded trees, and the gay parrots, or even of the monkeys of the South. Through the timber-yard, the atlas became a living world to us; and I have no doubt the sense of all these far-off things and creatures mingled like music with our plays, as we jumped from trunk to trunk, as free and happy as the squirrels and birds which had hopped from branch to branch in former days.

Here also were the chips out of which we constructed the fleets which sailed in the Leat at the top of the Leas, the fleets for which we made harbors and piers, and carried on our great contest with the elements that were always ruthlessly endeavoring to draw them over the cascade, to be crushed by the inexorable water-wheel.





CHAPTER V.

THE Sundays of our childhood, how much depends on them! To me the associations they bring are chiefly of sunshine and rest; undisturbed, unless by an uneasy sense of responsibility in relation to Sunday clothes.

I cannot recall much definite religious teaching. We used, certainly, to say the Church catechism to Mrs. Danescombe; and I must confess it seemed to me a very obscure collocation of words, in which it was nearly impossible not to put the wrong sentence first. I do not remember any part of it being explained to us, except the duty to our neighbor, which was enforced on us with strong personal application, and left me so oppressed with the impossibility of either saying or doing it, and so perplexed about the quantity of wrong things one might have done without knowing, that I should have been quite ready, with a certain little French girl at her first confession, to have pronounced myself guilty of all the sins prohibited in the Decalogue, including Simony.

My father never gave us direct lessons of any kind, religious or secular. He was undoubtedly not didactic, and I suppose he was not dogmatic; probably not finding any great necessity of formulas for his own use, and certainly not disposed to impose them on others. Neither was he given to cavil or to question. His mind was as little of the stuff heretics, as that of inquisitors, are made of; a subtle material, perhaps sometimes more similar than either think. In Scotland I think it probable he would have accepted the Westminster Confession, in Saxony the Confession of Augsburg, in France the great Creeds of the Gallican Church, his faith in all cases remaining substantially the same, and in all cases omitting the anathemas.

He was not theological at all in the sense of being keenly alive to the defects in other people's theology. He was theological to the core in the sense that St. John was the Theologian; in that his faith began with God rather than with man; less with man, erring, failing, sinning, than with God, loving, giving, forgiving.

Analysis and criticism were not his element. So far from his theology being negative, if anything was wanting in it, it was negations. If in after life we wandered into doubts and perplexities, to come back to him was to come back neither to elaborate solutions nor to anxious denunciations, but to the child's heart and the Apostles' Creed. His influence on us was through what he was, and what he loved.

Cowper, then a new poet, was his delight; not for his satire on social frailties, or his bitter lamentations over human depravity; but for his sympathy with human wrong, his gentle pathos, his sunny humor, his large and loving hope in man and God.

Not that my father was destitute of the force of indignation; but, like Cowper's, his indignation was reserved for injustice rather than for error; for the Bastille, for the slave trade, for the desecration of the sacrament into a political test, for the corruption and meannesses of "corporations," for "charging God with such outrageous wrong" as leaving the sages of old

"in endless woe

For ignorance of what they could not know."

It is strange to see how many abuses then hotly contended for, are now abandoned by the extreme reactionists; and on the other hand, how much of the larger hopes which still have to be contended for, had even then dawned on generous Christian hearts.

To my father we owe the blessing of liberation, space, and joyousness connected with Sunday, and to him also the inestimable benefit, that to us Christianity was associated, not with limitation, prohibition, retrogression, but with freedom, expansion, and progress, with all that is generous and glad and hopeful, and belonging to the light.

At eight o'clock the "warning" church-bell announced that it was Sunday; and father used to knock at our nursery door, and carry us off to

the weekly festival of breakfast in the Stone-parlor, Piers usually perched on his shoulders, and I holding his hand.

Then followed that long trial of patience,—the apparelling for church; and then the walk by father's side down the quiet yet festive street, between the closed shop windows, among the friendly greetings of the neighbors, across the churchyard, past that one corner of it which was the most sacred place on earth to him and to us, up the long aisle to our high, square pew, between the squire's and the vicar's.

When we sat down, my view was necessarily quite domestic, limited by the wooden walls. But when the singing began, it was my privilege to stand on the seat and survey the congregation; and most marvellous and interesting to me were the Sunday transformations of everybody by means of clothes.

There was far more difference between the best and every-day clothes in those days than now, and far more variety in costume, not only between different classes—between what might be termed generally rich and poor—but between the different orders and species of well-to-do people. Between the rich and poor the contrast was not only in form but in material. Silk was utterly unknown below a certain level; calico prints with imitations of French or Damascene patterns had not been made common by Manchester looms. Stout woolseys, woven in cottage looms, clean

white kerchiefs, and sober blues and hoddens greys characterized the free-seats.

Yet none of the transformations of Sunday seemed to me so complete and remarkable as that which set Reuben Pengelly in the choir gallery, embracing a huge musical instrument—not the “wee sinfa’ fiddle,” but a gigantic bass-viol; in a bright blue coat and scarlet waistcoat, which sat on his muscular unaccustomed limbs like plate armor, and a conspicuously white shirt, his face shining at once with friction and devotion. There was a sober radiance, and yet a sense of responsibility about his countenance which continually attracted me to it, and I always found myself ending my survey of my neighbors with that dear reverent old face, as if unconsciously I recognized it to be a shrine and altar from which more than could be heard or seen was going up to heaven.

And it must be confessed there was much to distract my attention. If the wages-paying and wages-receiving classes were thus sharply defined by the material of their clothes, the minor distinctions among their richer neighbors were equally marked to a discriminating eye by their chronology. It was but at a slow pace that our town toilettes could approach the standard of the squire’s, and still further of the countess’ pew, in those brief intervals when the compass shone on us.

Many decades of the fashion-book were thus represented around me, and it was impossible

that my eye should not be arrested by varieties reaching from the aristocratic French classics of tight skirts and short waists, to the hoop and high-whalebone hood of Miss Felicity Benbow, the schoolmistress, to whom a Sunday dress was a possession for life, and who would as soon have thought of changing her grandfather the general's Tory principles for Jacobinism, as her mother's fashions for raiment, which she severely, but blushing'ly, characterized as "little better than none at all."

I was not conscious of doing anything profane or unsabbatical in thus contemplating my neighbors.

At that time no gorgeous varieties of symbolical vesture had been thought of for the clergy; but I had no doubt that these varieties of costume among the laity formed as integral a part of the Sunday festivities as Tate and Brady, Reuben Pengelly's great bass-viol, and my uncle Parson Fyford's preaching a sermon in the pulpit robed in black.

I cannot remember anything special in those sermons; but I do remember well waking up from time to time, not, as far as I know, by external suggestions, to a sense of meaning and a sense of appropriation, in various parts of the Liturgy.

First there was the Lord's prayer. Whatever else in the service might be the peculiar possession of grown-up people, that plainly belonged to

us children. We said it every morning and evening. Then there was the Apostles' creed, which seemed to belong to the Lord's prayer, beginning with the Almighty Father and going on with its simple history of the Saviour who came from heaven, who also like us had once a mother, and was nailed on the dreadful cross, and had died, and had been "buried" like our mother; but unlike her, had risen again. He had, I knew, made other people rise again, but not mother yet. But one day He would make us all rise again; for that, father had told me, was what the end of the Creed meant. And then I should see mother.

But there were two versicles in the Prayer-book, which being entirely incomprehensible to me, I always privately revised.

Whatever the rest of the congregation might be able to say, being grown up, and no doubt having better consciences than I had, I, ignorant of archaic English, and keenly conscious of my own misdoings, could certainly never pray that God would "not deal with me after my sins," and "would not reward me after my iniquities." I who had become entangled in such a bewildering labyrinth of sins and iniquities, could I ask God not to deal any more after them with me? Therefore I always left out the "not." "Not dealing with me," as I understood it, so exactly represented my stepmother's mode of punishment. My food was given me, lessons were taught me, all the mechanism of life went on, even to the

morning and evening kiss ; but I, as a little trembling, clinging, living, loving personality, was left out, ignored, the averted eye never meeting mine ; my words indeed answered ; my wants supplied, but I myself unresponded to altogether ; close in body, in heart and soul banished into outer darkness. I myself was simply "not dealt with."

If God were at all like that, watching coldly and gravely in the expectation I should go wrong ; what a destiny, if for ever and ever I were to live in his sight and within his hearing, under the icy weight of his cold displeasure, not clear why I had offended Him, and feeling it quite hopeless to ask without the resource even of an occasional flash of indignant revolt, because of course He must be right !

Those versicles are, however, especially memorable to me as connected with one especial Sunday afternoon.

I had gone through a week of those small misdemeanors and misfortunes, connected, as usual, chiefly with behavior and clothes, in which mischance and misdoing were so inextricably confused to me, yet in which I so often felt that if the original offence which had drawn down the displeasure of my stepmother had been trifling, the burning anger and revolt aroused in me were *not* trifles. Moreover I had fallen into two undeniable passions about wrongs done, as I conceived, to Piers, and to the reigning kitten.

That Sunday therefore, with unusual fervor,

and with bitter secret tears. I had prayed my little private revision of the Liturgy.

“Deal with me! oh, do not give up dealing with me after my sins.”

Poor blundering childish prayer, I believe it was heard.

I had certainly no irreverent intention of correcting the compilers of the Prayer-book. I only thought I must be so much worse than other people who could calmly say the words as they were printed! Otherwise, of course, the words would never have been there. My stepmother had so often told me I was quite exceptionally naughty, and this Sunday at least, after such a week, I felt it must be true; more especially because my father himself, having come in at the climax of one of my passions, and not knowing the cause, had looked gravely distressed at me.

That Sunday afternoon it happened that my father was occupied with visitors, and Piers and I crept away to our usual resource, through the field to the foundry-yard, to pay a visit to Reuben Pengelly and Prisey his wife. They lived at the gate-house, and we were welcomed as usual. But I was very unhappy, feeling like a little exile even there. While Piers was sitting complacently on old Prisey Pengelly's knee, enjoying her adoration and his bit of apple pastry, I, quite beyond the consolation of caresses and pastries, sat and nursed my sorrows on the little wooden stool in the porch at Reuben's feet.

The very quiet of the place seemed to irritate me. I had so many hammers beating, and complicated wheels revolving in my little heart and brain, that the usual din and rattle of the works would have been more congenial to me.

Everything but me was so good and quiet and fit for Sunday! The water playing over the idle wheel, the lazy occasional creaking of some of the machinery (like a yawn of Pluto awakened out of sleep), the quiet noiseless investigations being pursued by Prisey's cat among heaps of iron, and stationary machines she would not have dared to come near on work-days; the absence of all the clamorous busy life that filled the place at other times, and the peace and shining cleanliness of Reuben's house and face, always made that porch seem to me the most Sunday-like place in the world. And I liked to hear old Reuben and Prisey talk, in a way I only half understood, but always, I felt, in good kind voices about good and happy things.

But that day the disquiet within was too deep to be soothed by the quiet without.

All Reuben's benevolent attempts to draw me into happy childish talk had failed, and at length, Piers having fallen asleep on Prisey's knee, and Prisey having fallen fast asleep too, Reuben looked tenderly down at me, and seeing, I suppose, the dull, stony look so unnatural on a childish face, he said—

“My lamb, what makes thee so wisht?”

It happened that just then I was watching a little drama being enacted on the opposite side of the yard, between Prisey's cat and a large brown hen. Anxiously the poor mother, ignorant of the restraints imposed on pussy by our presence, had been calling her chickens to her, and at length had succeeded in attracting the last of them, from the seductions of crumbs and grains, under the shelter of her wings. And there she sat, tenderly clucking over her little ones nestled close to her, and heroically confronting the enemy.

I had watched the little parable with a strange, choking bitterness; and, at first, when Reuben spoke, I could say nothing.

But when he stooped down and stood me beside his knee, and then took me on it, and held my hands so tenderly in his great sinewy hand, the first ice-crust of my reserve began to melt, and I said quietly—I felt too despairing for tears—

“Reuben, I cannot be good. I *cannot*. I have done so many sins and iniquities. I think God is going to give up dealing with me.”

I suppose he thought my case not very hopeless, for he smiled most complacently, and said—

“Give thee up, poor lamb! *At last!* Why He did not give up dealing with *me!*”

I did not feel the force of the consolation. What could Reuben have done as naughty as I had? I only shook my head.

“Why, what be ye thinking about Miss Bride, my dear?” came out in his hearty voice. “The

Lord is good, *good*; with poor hardened old sinners, and to thee! an innocent babe like thee!"

I felt much more like a hardened sinner, whatever that meant, than like an innocent babe; and suddenly something that had lain hidden at the bottom of my heart rose up at his words—something I could never have said to father, and had scarcely *said* even to myself.

"Reuben," I said, looking straight up into his eyes, "*is* God good? To you Reuben, but not to me—not to me. He took away mother! Even those little chickens have somewhere warm and soft to hide; and I have nowhere. God took away mother from me. He must have known I should never be good afterwards. He is *not* good to me."

Happily for me the old man did not crush the helpless cry of anguish with a reproof, as if it had been a mere wilful cry of revolt. But a look of pain came over his face, such as I should have felt if Piers had struck father! And he said, looking reverently upwards—

"Poor lamb! Poor motherless babe! She knows not what she says. She wants to be good, and she doesn't know how 'Thou wants it!—Thou who hast died for it!"

"I do want to be good, Reuben," I said, afraid I had not been quite honest. "But I want—oh, I want *mother*!"

"My lamb, my lamb," he said, "you want God! Mother is happy, for she loves God. She

did when she was here, dear soul, and now she is with Him and loves Him better, for she knows how God loves."

"Is mother happy, Reuben?" I said, roused to an unwonted daring. "How can she be happy? If she is living and awake, how can she be happy, and I so unhappy, and not good, and never going to be good? Why, even I could not be happy on father's knee, and father pleased with me, if Piers were hurt or naughty. And how could mother? She loved us more than that. I know—I know—if God would let her—mother would come back from anywhere—from *anywhere*—to help us and make us good. It is God who took her away and will not ever let her come back. And how can I pretend to love God, or say He is good to me?"

Reuben said nothing, but kept stroking my hands. I was afraid he was vexed; but when I glanced up at him I thought he had never looked so kind, although great tears were on his cheeks.

And then gently, as if I had been an infant, he carried me into his little house, and shut the door, and knelt down, with me beside him, and prayed till the drops stood on his forehead and the tears rained down his face.

He said something like this—

"O, blessed Father! Pity this poor wisht, forlorn babe. She has lost her mother, and she has lost sight of Thee. She doesn't understand. She thinks Thou art turning away Thy face from her, and not caring for her. And all the time it

is Thou who art stooping down and likening Thyself to *anything*—to that poor, helpless fool of a hen gathering her chickens—just to make us understand how Thou lovest us—calling, calling; spreading out Thy wings for her—for her! Lord, make the little one understand; make the babe hear and see.

“Blessed Lord Jesus, Thou knowest how we want to hear, and touch, and see; above all, the little ones. Thou camest that we might touch and see. Thou tookest them in thine arms, and laid Thine hands on them, that they might touch and see. Thou hast let them nail Thee to the Cross that we might feel and see. Ah, good Shepherd! And this little lamb has lost sight of Thee altogether! But Thou hearest her crying. Lord, it’s only the lamb bleating for its mother—Thy little lamb bleating for Thee! Take her home on Thy shoulders, Lord. Take her home to Thy heart, and make her happy, and make her good.”

Then he rose and sat down, and took me on his knees again. I leaned my head on his shoulder and was quite quiet—quiet in my heart too.

“My lamb,” he said, “that’s it; that’s all. You want God. And God wants you to be good. He gave his own Son for us. He would have left mother with you if He could. It seems to me He wants you just to look up, as it were, and see mother smiling on you in heaven, *as sure enough she is*; and then turning round to Him, *just that*

you may follow her eyes, and turn round to Him, too, and see how He is smiling on her, and on you both. Child, child! mother *is* happy! And she would never be happy unless she knew God was good, and good to you. Follow her looks up to His face, my lamb, and you will see what she sees."

All the time I had not cried. I had felt too naughty and wretched. But those words went to my heart.

"Mother knows God is good, *and good to me.*"

And I did try to follow her looks upwards to His face.

And He helped me; He did not give up dealing with me.

My new treasure was soon tested. For I remember the very evening after that Sunday afternoon talk with Reuben had begun to clear things a little to me, I ventured to say to my step-mother when I kissed her for the night, that I really hoped now I should be good, for I thought I had a little love to God, and He would help me.

My heart was glowing, yet it cost me much to stammer out those words. To me it was like a confession. It was in the Oak parlor. She was looking out of the window. She turned round, a little surprised, and questioned me with her eyes till I colored crimson; but she only said:—

"Very well, Bridget. I am sure I hope you will be good. You are liable to very violent ebullitions of feeling. I think it was two days

since you called me cruel because your kitten was whipped for stealing cream, and three days since you tried to take up your brother and kiss him when he was naughty and was put in the corner, and threw yourself in a frantic rage with me because I would not let you, which your father saw; and four days since you sat sobbing half-an-hour, as if your heart would break, because you had torn your pinafore, and had to mend it, instead of playing in the garden. You are subject to very vehement changes of emotion. I suppose this is one of them. I hope it will last, and that you will in future wash your hands in time for dinner, and keep your hair smooth. *I judge by fruits.*"

I crept humbly away, with the feeling one has in seeing the dog in Landseer's picture, with wistful eyes and appealing paws, entreating the parrot for a crumb of cheese.

Yet I believe the hail-showers and glaciers of my childhood were good for me, as well as its sunshine and soft dews. I went away saddened, but no more chilled to the heart; for I had learned that the sunshine and the dews, and soft brooding warm wings of ever-present love were at least as real as the cold. The key was in my hand; it has never been quite lost since; and secret after secret is unlocked to me whenever I touch the doors of hidden chambers with it.

So, as it happened, my feeling after mother became at last a feeling after God, and finding

Him, which I suppose, was part at least of what He meant.

It was on the Sunday after this that I was thinking I wished mother had been among some "goodly fellowship" or "glorious company" or "noble army" mentioned in the *Te Deum*, that I might have been sure she was among those we sang about as praising with us. And then it occurred to me that the Holy Church throughout the world could not mean the little bit of it where we are and which we see; where the prophets and apostles are not any longer.

I remembered Reuben's words, and all at once a heavy roof seemed lifted off from the world, and I followed mother's eyes up to his face, and saw that the church of our old town was only a little corner of the great Church throughout the world which is always praising Him; and that I, down in the dark room, and mother up in the light where she was waiting for me, without anything between, were singing our *Te Deum* together.

Thus the service gradually grew to shine out on me bit by bit, like far-off fields on our own moors lighted up one by one by the sun.

My attention to the sermon was less endangered by external objects; for I was always caused during its delivery to subside into the depths of a great pew, above whose walls nothing was visible to me but my unnie, Parson Fyford, the top of Miss Felicity's whalebone hood, the bows in Madam Glanvil's bonnet, which used periodically to

sway about and disappear, and then to recover and erect themselves inexplicably in a defiant manner; the grave face of Reuben Pengelly above the choir gallery, and the trees waving in the churchyard outside the windows.

I remember wondering why my uncle Fyford put on quite a different voice from that in which he spoke to us during the week, and whether I should ever be expected to understand what he said.

But my most vivid recollections of the sermon, especially after that Sunday afternoon with Reuben in the foundry-yard, were of a time of delicious rest, when the two people who were kindest to me in the world were looking serenely down upon me, and Piers, being by father's express sanction, allowed to go to sleep, was leaning his sleepy little head against me, and I was feeling like a little mother to him, with one hand around him, and the other hand nestled in father's; while above us was the dear sacred name on a white marble tablet, and a consciousness of a sacred corner outside in the churchyard, and of something more sacred and tenderer still above us in the sky; a light deeper than the sunlight, a smile kinder than father's, embracing mother and us all.

And eager and restless as I was, the sermon did not seem long to me; and a heaven "where congregations ne'er break up," would not have seemed to me a terrible threat at all.



CHAPTER VI.

AN excess of theology was not the excess prevalent in Abbot's Weir in my childhood. "High" and "low" in those days had reference rather to social than to ecclesiastical elevations; and "broad" was applied to acres or to cloth, not to opinions.

Whatever purpose the laity went to church for, severe critical analysis of my uncle Fyford's or his curate's sermons was not one of them.

I remember not unfrequently hearing strong comments on the extravagance of some people's garments and the imperfections of others', but never any derogatory remarks on the extravagances or defects, or "unsoundness" of any kind, of the various doctrines delivered to us.

Occasionally I recollect my father's gentle protesting that the Doctor—my uncle was a D. D.—had "given us that again a little too soon;" but a suspicion that sermons were intended to be transferred beyond the church doors for discussion (or, I am afraid also, for practice), never crossed my mind.

Indeed, all the sects represented in our little town had subsided into a state of mutual tolerance which might have seemed exemplary, had not this tolerance extended to some things which all Christian sects are supposed not to tolerate.

Protests were not the style of the day. "Against the stream" scarcely any one seemed pulling. The effect was a drowsy tranquillity. The various pulpits would as little have ventured to fulminate against the enormities of the slave-trade, the intoxication common at all convivial gatherings, the rioting at the races on our down, the cruelties of our bull-baitings in the market-place, as against each other.

"Were the feelings of the congregation to be wantonly disregarded?" my uncle Fyford would have pleaded. "Had not one of Madam Glanvil's sons been a slave-holder? and had not the enormities of the slave-trade been greatly exaggerated? Were there any of the most respectable of the congregation who did not occasionally take a glass too much? (drunkenness was not then a mere low habit of the 'lower classes;') and were the little 'harmless frailties' of the most respectable of the parishioners to be wantonly dragged into the light? And even the 'lower orders,' no doubt, must also have their amusements; poor creatures, their lot of toil was hard enough already without being further embittered by Puritanical austerities. What was the occasional discomfort of a bull, a creature without a soul (and without a

literature to celebrate its wrongs), compared with the importance of keeping up a manly, ancient English pastime, a healthy outlet, no doubt, for a certain—brutality, we will not call it, but—a certain recklessness of blood inherent in the very vigor of the Saxon nature? Was there not even a text for it? Had not St. Paul said (possibly not in precisely the same connection), ‘Did God take care for oxen?’ And should we be more merciful than St. Paul? No; let such pretences be left to the over-refined sensibilities of a Jean Jacques Rousseau, to a nation which could guillotine its sovereign and weep over a sentimental love-story (especially if the love were misplaced), or to the gloomy asceticism of an austere Puritanism now happily for England extinct.”

I used sometimes to suspect from the vehemence with which my uncle defended this custom, he being at once a tranquil and merciful man, that his conscience was a little uneasy at the sufferings to which, as a devoted entomologist, he exposed the various beetles which were impaled in the glass cases in the vicarage. He could always be roused on the subject of the nervous sensibilities of animals, and I remember a hot debate between him and my father on Shakespeare’s lines—

“The beetle that we tread upon
In corporal sufferance feels a pang as keen
As when a giant dies,”—

which my uncle characterised as sentimental and pernicious trash.

I believe he would very gladly have stretched the same conviction to the nervous sensibilities of negroes; but his candor was too much for him; and with regard to the abolition of the slave-trade he had to take up other grounds, such as the general tendency of Africans to make each other miserable in Africa, if let alone, and the antecedent improbability that "Providence" would have created a substance so attractive to white people as sugar, and so impossible for white people to cultivate, and would have prospered our sugar plantations and sugar planters as It had, unless It had meant that sugar should be cultivated by blacks, and consequently that blacks should be brought from Africa.

Thus it happened, in consequence of all these various arguments, or rather in consequence of the prepossessions by which so many of our arguments are predetermined, that Abbot's Weir protested against very little, at that time, either in church or chapel. My uncle did indeed periodically protest against various evils mostly remote or obsolete, such as Popery on the anniversary of the Gunpowder Plot, the heresies of the fourth century on Trinity Sunday, or the schisms of the seventeenth century on the festival of King Charles the Martyr.

But he rejoiced to think that we had fallen on different times, when Englishmen had learned to live in harmony.

Did not he himself indeed exemplify this har-

mony by a cordial if somewhat condescending intercourse with the Rev. Josiah Rabbidge, the mild successor of the fiery Cromwellian minister who, at the Restoration, had been driven from the pulpit of the parish church?

Mild indeed had that Presbyterian congregation become, in doctrine, in discipline, and in zeal; and difficult would it have been for any one short of a Spanish Inquisitor of the keenest scent to fasten a quarrel on theological grounds on the Rev. Josiah Rabbidge, a gentle and shy little man whose personality was all but overwhelmed under the combined weight of a tall and aggressive wife, the fourteen children with which she had enriched him, the instruction of the boys of the town when they emerged from the mixed Dame's School of Miss Felicity Benbow, and a congregation which it was not easy to keep awake, especially on Sunday afternoons.

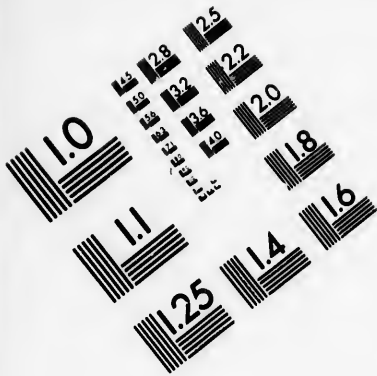
Of this last fact I had personal experiences, one of our maids being sometimes in the habit of taking us to the chapel on Sunday afternoons, when uncle Fyford was preaching in his second church in the country; attracted, I believe, not by the theology, but by the greater brevity of the service, and the greater comfort of the cushions.

I do not remember being struck with any great difference, except that Mr. Rabbidge's prayers were shorter, and not in the Prayer-book, and that he generally used the term "the Deity" where my uncle said "Providence."

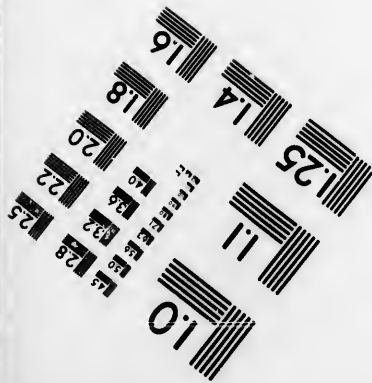
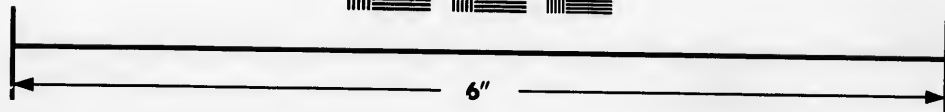
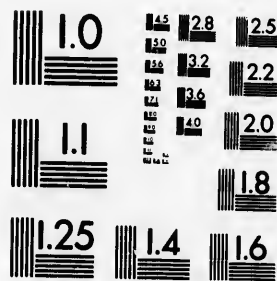
I suppose the terms were characteristic in both cases. Mr. Rabbidge's element, when he could escape to it, was literature; my uncle's nature. To both human life was a subordinate thing. To my uncle, indeed, it was brought near by the household presence of his orphan nephew, Dick Fyford, and three thousand parishioners, who had at intervals to be married, christened, and buried; and to Mr. Rabbidge by the constant inevitable pressure of a wife to be propitiated, fourteen children to be fed, a large portion of the boy-humanity of Abbot's Weir to be taught, and that somnolent congregation to be kept awake. Still, to both all this tide of human life was a disturbing accident, from which they escaped when practicable—Mr. Rabbidge to his dearly-prized ancient folios, and my uncle to his beetles. And as must happen, I think, to all from whom the human life around recedes, the Divine seemed to recede also; and on the very pursuits they cared for more than for humanity, fell a lifelessness and a barrenness. Nature herself refuses to be more than a scientific catalogue to those who subordinate humanity to her. The thoughts and lives of the men of the past become mere fossils to those who neglect for them the living men and women of the present. If the present does not live for us, how can the past? If our "neighbor" has no personality we reverence and supremely care for, how can nature be to us more than a collection of things? If humanity does not come home to our hearts, how







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can God? Thus, in a measure, moderated indeed by the merciful duties they were inclined to look on as hindrances, the law of love avenged itself. Nature became to my uncle not so much a living wonder and glory, as a storehouse to furnish glass-cases for insects; and history to Mr. Rabbidge rather a museum of antiquities than a record of continuous life; and God not so much the Father and the Saviour as the "Providence" which arranges with marvellous ingenuity the mechanism of the universe, or the "Deity" which dwells afar off in thick darkness at the sources of History.

Of the Incarnation, or of the Cross, they had little need, in such a view of nature and of human life.

It was probably, therefore, rather by an accident of position that my uncle retained the dogma in his creed, while Mr. Rabbidge had glided, unperceived by his congregation, and possibly by himself, into a mild and most unaggressive Arianism.

And yet in all this I speak rather of their theories, and of what these would have made them, than of themselves; or rather of what they would have made themselves than of what God made them.

My uncle could not, with the best intentions, live for beetles, nor Mr. Rabbidge for books.

That rollicking cousin of ours, Diek Fyford, was perpetually plucking him back to the roughest realities of human life in its crudest form of boy;

to the crudest form of British boy, a boy with an invincible inclination for the sea.

And to poor Mr. Rabbidge's discipline, no doubt, all Abbot's Weir contributed, from Mrs. Rabbidge to Piers and Dick Fyford, as Mrs. Danescombe did to mine. What fossils, what monsters, or what intolerable bores we should become if we could get rid of the things and persons in our lives we are apt to call hindrances!

The intercourse between my uncle and Mr. Rabbidge was, no doubt, made more amicable by the manifest differences in their persons and positions. There could, my uncle felt, be no danger of a man forgetting the social distinctions caused by the union of Church and State, who had, to begin with, to raise his eyes eighteen inches before they encountered his own; whose rapid, hesitating utterance contrasted characteristically with my uncle's slow, round, sonorous enunciation; who had to compress sixteen people into the old Abbey gate-house, an appendage of the rectory for which my uncle declined to receive any but a pepper-corn rent; to whom the glebe cows and vegetables were as serviceable as to the rector himself.

Not that Mr. Rabbidge's independence of thought was in any way affected by these favors, or by the necessity of accepting them. No sense of favors past or to come would have made him indifferent to the value of a Greek particle, not, I mean, only in the Athanasian creed, but any-

where: and he had heresies from the Oxford pronunciation of Greek and Latin, in defence of which he would have suffered any persecution, civil or domestic. In this the spirit of his Puritan ancestors survived in him, and not even the eloquent and forcible Mrs. Rabbidge herself could have constrained him to any compliance beyond silence.

But my uncle's sense of ecclesiastical dignity was satisfied by conferring these benefits. It was not necessary by any extra chill and polish of manner further to accentuate a difference already sufficiently marked. And therefore the intercourse was of the friendliest kind; Mr. Rabbidge's fourteen were welcome at all times to enter the rectory garden through the arched door, which connected it with the little garden of the gatehouse, Dick Fyford being after all a far more dangerous inmate than the whole fourteen together.

Meanwhile Mr. Rabbidge found recondite allusions to beetles in the classics, Greek and Latin, and my uncle returned the compliment by referring in his articles in the *Sentimental Magazine* to quotations suggested by his "learned friend Mr. Rabbidge." One point my uncle never yielded to "separatists." As an orthodox Churchman, and as the minister of a State religion, he could not be expected to concede to the alumnus of a Dissenting academy the title of Reverend. It would, he considered, be to eliminate all signifi-

cance from the word. "Titles," said my uncle, "*are* titles; to accord the right to confer them on any self-elected community was to undermine the citadel of all authority. Persons who began with calling a Presbyterian teacher Reverend, might naturally end with calling their sovereign "citizen." Mr. Rabbidge would, he knew, comprehend his motives." And Mr. Rabbidge did, and never protested.

For they had the link said to be stronger than a common love—a common hate; if so fiery a word may be applied to any sentiment possible in zones so temperate.

They both hated "Jacobinism"—my uncle as a man of property, which any convulsions might endanger, and Mr. Rabbidge as a peaceable and not very valiant citizen, who in any contest was not likely to get the upper hand.

And they both disapproved of Methodism, the only aggressive form of religion they were acquainted with—my uncle condemning it chiefly as having a "Jacobinical" tendency to set up the "lower orders" and to "turn the world upside down," and Mr. Rabbidge as an enthusiasm likely to set people's hearts above their heads, and so turn their brains upside down.

And yet, such are the inconsistencies of the best balanced minds, Reuben Pengelly continued every Sunday morning to play the principal bass-viol in the choir gallery, every Sunday evening to take a principal part in the prayers and exhor-

tations in the little Methodist meeting, and every day and night, everywhere when he was wanted to pray beside the dying beds or broken hearts among my uncle's parishioners.

And there were instances in which Mr. Rabbidge had even been known to call poor Reuben in, when he had found his somnolent and respectable congregation roused by some dim memory of the old Puritan teaching, for which their forefathers had fought, or by some of the terrible realities of life or death to an unquenchable thirst for something which he did not comprehend, which neither the mild Arianism of the chapel, nor the mild orthodoxy of the church afforded, but which Reuben seemed able to give; some dim orphaned feeling after One who is more than "Providence" and "the Deity," whom Reuben trusted and called on, in no very classical English, as "the Lord, the living Lord, the Lord who died for us and liveth evermore, the loving, pitying, and providing God and Father of us all."

My uncle and Mr. Rabbidge both thought it very strange; but human nature, especially in the "lower orders" and in women, is a strange compound; what classical author has not in one phrase or another said so?

Principle, sober principle, the incontrovertible precepts of morality, ought to be enough for rational humanity; but in all the relations of life, and even it seemed in religion, men and women, especially women, could not be satisfied without

something more than sober principle to guide their judgment; they must have their hearts stirred, they must laugh for joy, and tremble, and weep—they must have emotion; and as this was so, perhaps it was well that a man, on the whole, so respectful to authority, and so trustworthy as Reuben Pengelly, was to be found to supply the material.

Or as Reuben put it:—

“The devil took care there should always be sinners, and the Lord took care there should always be saints beyond the reach of anything but his blessed Gospel and his good Spirit.”





CHAPTER VII.

OPPPOSITE our windows, across the Corn Market, was a long, low, rambling old house, once a dower-house of the Glanvil family, but long before my recollection the abode of Miss Felicity Benbow, the guide and the terror of successive generations of juvenile Abbot's Weir.

Piers and I, sitting on the window-seat of the Stone parlor, frequently observed the children going in and out of that wide-arched door. The house, and Miss Felicity herself, had a kind of horrible fascination for us. Sooner or later we knew those solemn portals would open on us, and engulf us also in that unknown world within, where dwelt the dark, shadowy powers of discipline and knowledge, represented in the person of Miss Felicity.

Thither every morning and afternoon we saw the children, a little older than ourselves—some, it was rumored, *not* older—tend in twos or threes, or one by one, with lingering and sober steps, the small satchel on the shoulder, and occasionally the

book, too late consulted, being anxiously conied over ; and hence in a body, at the appointed hour, we saw them issue with softened voices and quiet, sobered paces for a few steps beyond the door, as far, at least, as the range of Miss Felicity's windows, subdued by the restraints of those unknown powers within ; and then through the narrow streets, in different directions, we heard the joyous voices sound louder and freer as they distanced the solemn precincts, scattering frolic and music through the town as they separated to their different homes.

There, also, on wet days, the various maids of the richer families gathered with hoods and cloaks for their young masters and mistresses. And there, every morning and evening, the aristocrat of the school, Madam Glanvil's little orphan granddaughter, was brought and fetched, by the old black butler in livery, on her white pony ; a grave, retiring child, with dark, pallid complexion and overhanging brows, and with large, wistful brown eyes, which often seemed to meet mine, and always seemed to speak to me from some mysterious new world. The rest of the children thought her proud and supercilious ; but those strange, deep eyes, with their wonderful occasional lights—not the dewy sparkle of English eyes, but a flash as from tropical skies—always had an irresistible attraction for me. They had a wistful longing in them, like Pluto's eyes, and yet a depth I could not fathom, which always drew me back question-

ing and guessing. Something between the mysteries of the dumb animal-world and the mysteries of the invisible spirit-world was in them. I could not tell why, but they made me think at once of the dog Pluto, and of my mother.

I could watch no one while she was there, and I grew to feel at last that the attraction must be mutual, for she always guided the white pony near our windows, and in a furtive way used, I felt, to watch Piers and me, although she always looked away if our eyes met. Occasionally, moreover, on stormy days, an old black nurse used to appear with two black footmen and a sedan-chair, instead of the one negro with the white pony. The black nurse used to apparel the young lady in a mass of orange and scarlet splendors, and enter the chair with her, and then in stately procession Miss Amice Glanvil would be borne away to the fine old manor-house among the woods on the hill, called Court.

Altogether, therefore, Miss Amice was to me like a tropical dream of glow and gloom, such as our temperate zone could not produce; a creature from a region of splendors and shadows, altogether deeper and richer than ours; a region where the birds and flowers are scarlet and gold; a land of earthquakes and hurricanes, and wildernesses of beauty, of magnificence, and tragedy.

For I knew that those black people were slaves, and the gleam of their white teeth, and the flash of their brilliant eyes when they pulled

their woolly locks, as they used good-humoredly to do to us children watching at the window, used not to terrify me as it did many of the children in the town, nor to amuse me, but to make me feel inclined to cry. They always made me think of Pluto when he was chained up in the kennel and fawned and whined on us. Only Pluto was at home, and they were not; and Pluto was a dog, and they were not; which made all the difference. I thought, for him and for them. They were called also by the classical names which in France and in Italy have retained their dignity, but in England were only given in a sort of kindly contempt or facetious pity to dogs and to negroes. I had heard the black woman call them Cato and Cæsar; and they called her Chloe.

Moreover we had, through Reuben Pengelly, an acquaintance with Chloe's history, which gave us a glimpse into the tragedy which underlay the splendors of Amice Glanvil's life.

Chloe had a whole woman's world of her own, in her own country in Africa, not dead, living and needing her, but buried to her irrevocably and forever.

She used to come now and then, when she was allowed, to Reuben's prayer-meetings, and sometimes rather to confuse him by the fervency of her amens, and of her shrill quavering singing, in the refrains of the hymns. One evening she still further bewildered the kindly man by breaking out suddenly in a passion of sobs.

Reuben told us the story on the next Sunday, in the silent foundry-yard.

"I couldn't for the life of me tell why," he said, he having no oratorical vanity to explain such emotion. "I was only talking to the folks quite plain and quiet how the blessed Lord sat weary by the well, and asked the poor woman for a drink from her pitcher, and how she was slow to give it Him. Chloe staid after the rest had gone, still rocking herself to and fro, as if she were rocking a baby, hiding her face, and sobbing fit to break her heart. So I went up to her soft and quiet, not to fluster her, and I said, 'The Lord has touched thee, poor dear soul. Cheer up. Ho wounds and He can bind up.' 'Never, Massa Reuben, *never,*' said she (poor soul, she always calls me Massa, she knows no better). 'Never bind up. *He knows better than to try.* Let the wounds bleed. No other way.' And then, in their sudden way, like children, she looked up and showed all her white teeth, and smiled, and downright laughed. It was more than a man could make out. 'It was all along of that pitcher and that well,' said she. And then she told me how she had gone to the well one evening, years ago, by her hut, away in Africa, with her pitcher, to fetch water for her children, with her baby in her arms. The children lay sick with fever. But at the well the slave-hunters found her, gagged her, bound her, forced her away to the coast, and squeezed her down with hundreds of others into

the slave-ship. She heard the sick children, day and night, moaning—moaning for her. Many of the poor creatures with her refused to eat, and many died; but she had the baby, and tried to live. And as she went on telling she cried again, and then she smiled again. ‘Never mind me, Massa Reuben,’ said she; ‘it was only that pitcher. Seemed to me all the place, and all the years melted away. I was at home again at that well again with the pitcher, and instead of the slave-hunters, the good Lord himself stood there, and said, ‘Give me to drink.’ And she seemed to answer Him, her pitcher was gone, all was gone, she had nothing to draw with and there was nothing to draw. And He said, all smiling, it was not the water He wanted, but just herself. ‘Just me,’ said she, ‘sitting there weary, just as He did once, poor old Chloe, that He died for; me and my bit of love.’ And she saw the hands and the feet all torn and bleeding, worse than dust on them that a woman’s tears might wash away, blood on them to wash away her sins, and she seemed just to take her heart, as it was all dry and empty, and give it Him. ‘And He looked as glad,’ said she, ‘as a thirsty man for a drink of water. All for me, Massa Reuben, all because he cared to be loved by me.’” And then Reuben said, “I cried too, just as she did, poor soul! The baby died just as the voyage was over, and then when they came on shore Squire Granvil bought her for a nurse to Miss Amice. His wife had just died at her birth,

and the poor fool loves Miss Amice like her own. It's wonderful," concluded Reuben, "what them poor creatures will cling to and catch at, just for anything to love, though for the matter of that, Priscy's no better. The women are like enough all the world over, poor souls. God bless them."

Miss Felicity used sometimes to descend to the door with the little lady, and watch her across the market-place, which gave us ample opportunity of studying that physiognomy so important to our future fate.

She was a tall and rather a majestic woman, with a stiff, erect carriage (a perpetual monition to all lounging little boys and girls), keen black eyes, high Roman features, and a severe mouth resolutely closed, as if her life had been a battle with difficulties harder to conquer than the little mischievous elves who could never evade her penetrating eyes, or the terrible instrument of justice they guided.

Yet it was not a face which repelled me, or made me feel afraid. I felt rather drawn towards her, as a kind of tutelary Athena; not very close, not exactly as a child to her heart, but as a subject to her feet, with a kind of confidence of justice in those steady eyes, and those stern grave lips. There was no fretfulness in the lines of the furrowed brow, in the curve of the mouth; no uncertainty of temper in the large keen eyes. If she had carried the *Ægis*, I do not think I should

have had any fear of her petrifying the wrong people by turning it on them.

There were two other inhabitants of that old mansion besides Miss Felicity.

Every fine morning in summer, before people were up, and every fine evening in winter, as it began to grow dusk, from that arched door, where poured in and out every day the joyous tide of young life, came forth two very different figures, one the stately form of Miss Felicity, and the other a man tall as herself, but bowed and stooping, moving with uncertain and uneven gait, and leaning on Miss Felicity's arm. They crept away into the country by the least steep of the three roads which led out of the town, and in about an hour re-entered the old house and disappeared, and the stooping tall man's figure was seen no more till the next day. It was believed they went always as far as a certain ancient well by the roadside, called the Benit or Blessed Well; for they were often seen resting on the stone bench beside it, and had never been found further on.

It was curious how people respected the mystery Miss Felicity chose to consider thrown around that ruined life. Keen as her perceptions were, sharp and definite her words on every other subject, around him she gathered a veil of fond excuses and illusions, so thin that all the town saw through it, and yet all the town recognized it for her sake.

To us children, indeed, something of the mys-

tery really existed, taking the form of a half-concealing, half-glorifying mist, which surrounded Miss Felicity with a halo, and through which the tall, bent form loomed, at once a tower and a beacon, like a ruined church set on one of the heights along our coasts, once meant to be a sacred shrine, but now, the sacredness shattered out of it, surviving only as a warning against wreck.

Lieutenant Benbow had been in the army, we knew, and had been a fine handsome man, and had grown suddenly old in middle life, not altogether by misfortune, but by something sadder, which hung like a sword of Damocles over the festival of life for any of us to whom life was only feasting.

To me especially those two had a terrible, yet tender interest.

Lieutenant Benbow had been to Miss Felicity what Piers was to me. She had loved him, delighted in him, lived for him after the death of her father. (Happily for herself the mother had died early.) She had loved him with the kind of blind love which some think the truest and most womanly. To me the blindness always seems to come, not from the love, but from the little alloy of pride and selfishness in the love which so far makes it false. It is possible so to love another as ourselves that the very love comes to partake of the nature of self-love, exaggerating, concealing, untrue, unjust, falsely excusing, falsely gilding. And yet not quite. The little grain of true love at the bot-

tom of the most selfish affection makes it by that grain at least better than mere selfishness. The miser who half starves his children in hoarding for them has surely in his hoard something a degree more sacred than there can be in that of the miser who hoards for himself alone. And with Miss Felicity that grain of true love was large, and for herself, at least, fruitful; fruitful, at least, in sacrifice.

Lieutenant Benbow had followed his father's profession. Their means were not large, but her delight had been to have his appointments as choice and abundant as those of the richest. And the idol had accepted the homage; repaid it, even, by such small and symbolical acknowledgments as can be expected from duly incensed idols.

She knew he had at least one fatal habit. In a day when all gentlemen drank more than was good for them, he drank more than most, and, unfortunately, could stand less.

Once only Miss Felicity's eyes were all but opened. He persuaded a lovely young Quaker girl to elope with him and to marry him.

Miss Felicity did not wonder at the Quaker maiden's infatuation, but she did wonder at her brother's. The Quaker maiden's father was a tanner, and, true daughter of a general and of the church, granddaughter of a bishop, Miss Felicity did not enjoy having to double her libations and incense in honor, not of her Adonis of a brother, but of his separatist wife, a person of "low trad-

ing origin who had enticed away his affections." To double her offerings, and lose even the little return they had previously won, was almost too much to bear.

The thirteen years of the lieutenant's married life were those, therefore, in which Miss Felicity's adoration was feeblest.

In thirteen years the lieutenant succeeded in breaking his wife's heart and ruining his own health. He returned to his sister a widower with one little girl, his constitution and his fortunes alike wrecked, having some time before been obliged to leave the army, partially paralyzed, with a child's helplessness, and a spoiled child's imperiousness and irritability, to be a burden for the rest of his life on the woman he had scarcely noticed while he had another to worship him. But he returned, and that to Miss Felicity was everything. She blotted the tanner's daughter out of her memory, took the tanner's granddaughter to her heart, accepted her idol again, set it on its old pedestal with all the strength of her strong will and strong affections, and with a kind of melancholy pleasure in the certainty that if her "Bel bowed down and her Nebo stooped, and were a burden to the weary beast," no one would dispute that burden with her any more.

So she toiled on and bore her burden, and adored it, her old, beautiful god-image, which "cruel circumstances," she said to herself, "and the excess of his own fascinations," had shattered,

and crowned the old idol with a crown woven out of all the loss and all the possibilities, of all it had been, and of all it might have been.

Year by year she bought the finest cloth for his coats, and day by day she bought the best dainties for his palate, and seated him in the one easy chair, in the sunniest nook of the window in summer, and the warmest corner of the fireside in winter; and when he condescended to that milder degree of grumbling, which was his form of thanksgiving, she rejoiced in the character which would have been so lovely but for "the selfish world and the ruthless circumstances which had made him what he was."

It was a provoking ritual to observe from outside, especially to me, not being a worshipper of the lieutenant, and having a reverence little short of worship for the daughter, little Miss Loveday, who was compelled to share in the sacrificial rites.

Of course Miss Felicity had a right to sacrifice herself; but who could have had a right to take all individual hope and pleasure out of that gentle, lovely, patient woman's life, with all her intellectual and spiritual power, and subordinate her entirely to propping up the ruins of what had never been better than a well-grown animal!

For Miss Loveday was the nearest approach to a saint I knew; and I thank God I had the grace to know it while she was among us. It is among the saddest of our irrevocable losses when we find out, for the first time, that some of the

noly ones of God have been beside us for us to consult, learn of, speak to, listen to, only when they have gone from us to be with the goodly company, who are, indeed, not far from us, but are just beyond speaking distance, out of reach, for the time, of voice and sight.

My father helped me to the recognition. Miss Loveday had been a friend of my own mother's, and he had the greatest reverence and love for her.

He used to say the poet Cowper must have seen her in spirit when he wrote the lines—

“Artist, attend, your brushes and your paint—
Produce them; take a chair, now draw a saint.
Oh, sorrowful and sad! The streaming tears
Channel her cheeks—a Niobe appears.
Is this a saint?—throw tints and all away,
True piety is cheerful as the day,—
Will weep, indeed, and heave a pitying groan
For others' woes, but smiles upon her own.”

Certainly Loveday Benbow “smiled upon her own woes” with a smile so real and bright, that the woes and the saintliness, the burden and the strength which bore it, might easily have been hidden from a careless eye. As to the pitying groan for others' woes, not only could that be relied on for any woes, from the breaking of a child's doll to the breaking of a maiden's heart, but, what is rarer for one whose life is passed in the shadows, she had a smile true and heart-warming as a sunbeam for others' joys, from a child's holiday to

a maiden's happiness in being loved, or a mother's joy in loving.

She was a little deaf, and had that sweet inquiring wistfulness in her grey eyes which belongs often to deaf or dumb creatures, human or canine; but so sweet and ready was her sympathy, and so wise her counsel, that she was the natural depository of half the love-confidences in the place; the difficulty and danger of shouting such delicate experiences being nothing to the recompense in the quickness of her comprehension and the fulness of her response.

Clever, or intellectual, were words you would no more have thought of applying to her than to an archangel; and with her heart and brain were so blended, that I have sometimes wondered whether it was that her wit was originally keener than other people's, or that it was sharpened by singleness of purpose; whether it was original force of thought and imagination that made her comprehend every character quickly, or love that quickened thought and imagination into something as unerring as instinct.

My stepmother's insight into character was that of a satirist or of a detective keen to scent out a defect. Miss Felicity's was that of an inspector of the human species, impartial, penetrating, severe but just. Miss Loveday's insight was that of a physician, as keen and as just as either, but deeper, reaching beyond symptoms to causes,

to the springs where the disease can be touched and healed.

Sometimes, indeed, she would reproach herself with this quick penetration through disguises and excuses, as if it were not as necessary to the helpers of humanity as to its critics to see truly.

But it is true that the heightening of any one power of nature requires the heightening of every power to avoid deformity; the growth of every spiritual, as well as every intellectual gift, demands the growth of every other to preserve harmony.

The very truth of Miss Loveday's character which made her perceptions so true would have made her a keener detective than my stepmother, and a severer judge than Miss Felicity, if love had not overwhelmed the bitter in the sweet, and made the justice glow into pity through a deeper faith and a larger hope in God and man.

She always had something of the dove in my eyes, as Miss Felicity had much of the eagle, and in my darker moments my stepmother not a little of the raven. Doves need sight as keen to defend their blood as eagles to desery their prey. And Miss Loveday's brood was all the human creatures that had need of her. Partly, no doubt, this dove-like grace that encircled her was assisted by her voice, which, as with many deaf people, had a peculiar under-toned softness, like cooings under thick summer leaves; and partly by her dress, which was chiefly replenished from her mother's

Quaker wardrobe, in which the prosaic drab was ignored, and the poetical dove-color and white predominated.

Miss Loveday's dress was what has always seemed to me the loveliest and most becoming of any to middled-aged and elderly women. It retained the Quaker quietness and the delicious Quaker freshness, without the Quaker peculiarities; and her manner was just like her dress. She is fondly enveloped to my memory in a soft grey and white cloud of clothing, which, when I try to analyze it, resolves itself into the whitest of caps, framing her pale sweet face, the neatest of white muslin neckerchiefs folded over her bosom, and the softest of unrustling grey woollen drapery falling in sweeping easy folds around her. Not one sudden, startling, dazzling thing about her in dress, or manner, or voice, not the rustle of silk, or the glitter of a jewel; except the irrepressible occasional twinkle of her kind eyes, and the occasional merry ring which was like an audible twinkle in her soft voice and her laugh.

She was just the opposite (I do not mean the contrary) of Amice Glanvil, who was all mystery and surprise.

The sorrows on which Miss Loveday smiled so radiantly were not sentimental. From her childhood she had been under the yoke unimaginal, unavoidable, of pain; the yoke which in some respects presses closer on the immortal spirit, and cuts deeper into it than any other, and therefore

can in some respects mould it to a more delicate perfection, and furrow it for larger harvests.

No one in Abbot's Weir had been able to fathom the cause.

We had two doctors in Abbot's Weir. One, Dr. Kenton, was of sanguine temperament, attributed all ailments to debility, and relied for cure chiefly on "nature" and port wine.

The other, Dr. Looseleigh, was of a melancholic disposition, had a strong faith in the depravity of the human constitution, attributed ailments to excess, and hoped for relief, as far as he hoped at all, from bleeding, blistering, and the lowering system in general.

Both medical gentlemen had patients who recovered, and patients who died. But in Abbot's Weir, although theological controversy was mild, the same could not be said of medical. Each generation, whatever its theological proclivities, desires to live as long as it can; debates on what man or system can enable it to live longest, are naturally therefore not liable to "periods of luke-warmness or declension."

The partisans of Mr. Kenton said that those patients of Mr. Looseleigh who died were killed, actually slain, by his remedies; and those who recovered, recovered by the force of nature.

The partisans of Dr. Looseleigh said that the patients of Dr. Kenton who recovered struggled through by miracle or the vigor of an exceptional constitution, and that those who died, perished

the victims of neglect, sheer neglect, and faithless contempt of means.

Both systems had been tried on Miss Loveday, but neither successful. She had been blistered and bled in childhood by Mr. Looseleigh into all but atrophy. She had been "built up" by Dr. Kenton and Miss Felicity into a fever. The only part of either system which she declined was the port wine or brandy. This she resolutely refused. She had promised her mother never to touch either. Dr. Kenton therefore had the advantage in the controversy, in which Miss Loveday's case was a standing weapon. If she could have been induced to break that absurd promise, port wine and nature might overcome Dr. Looseleigh and disease, and the controversy might have been settled forever, at least so far as facts can settle controversies. As to those deeper roots in the depth of our own consciousness, whence my father and other sceptical neutrals asserted both systems to arise, those, of course, nothing so superficial as facts and phenomena could have reached.

However, from whatever cause, thus it came to pass that Miss Loveday's yoke was not broken, and she had to suffer and conquer to the end.

Miss Felicity nevertheless, with whom permanent neutrality was an impossible state of existence, who found it necessary, and therefore practicable, to make up her mind quite decidedly about everything, remained faithful to Dr. Kenton and the port-wine "system," influenced partly, it

was believed, by the necessity of seeing some root of good in the evil tendency which had sapped her brother's existence.

It was also believed that the weekly visits which Dr. Kenton continued to pay had, on his part at least, a tenderer significance than Miss Felicity chose to acknowledge. There had been days when the genial doctor had paid Miss Felicity the most marked attentions; and during the years when her brother's marriage had separated her from the one ceaseless object of her devotion, Abbot's Weir had believed that it detected a gradual softening of the tutelary Athena manner towards him. It was considered that the prospect of a pleasant home, a life without care, and an affection which manifested itself in the flattering form of respecting her judgment enough to carry on continual controversies with her, were beginning to melt the impenetrable heart of Miss Felicity, and that she would soon consent to be an illustrious case in proof of the success of the building-up system.

But her sister-in-law died, the lieutenant became a helpless invalid, and returned to receive once more his sister's homage; and from that moment Dr. Kenton's hopes were blighted.

Miss Felicity returned to her old life-long rôle of priestess and amazon, adoration at her old shrine, and unflinching conflict with infidels and with circumstances for its sake. And Dr. Kenton, after some vain remonstrances, and some years of comparative estrangement, came back, partly by

means of his medical care of Miss Loveday, to his old position of admiration and contention; he ceased to sigh, but never ceased to think it worth while to put Miss Felicity right on the various points on which they differed; and to the end the stately, brave old gentlewoman had some one who continued to see her with the light of youth on her, and to maintain that she was the finest woman in Abbot's Weir, and had more brains and more spirit than all the men of the town put together.





CHAPTER VIII.

IT was about two years after my father's second marriage that Piers and I were called on to rejoice in the arrival of a stepbrother.

Then Mrs. Danescombe's heart awoke. It was as if her whole nature, pent up for forty years, burst forth in that late passion of maternal love.

I believe she tried hard to be just to us all. I believe she tried hard to see what spots there might be in her boy's character. But it was impossible. The rest of the world she continued to see through the same cold, clear, cloudy, frosty winter daylight in which she had hitherto lived. Around this child glowed and palpitated ceaselessly a flood of tropical sunlight. Faults, of course, her Francis had, her judgment admitted he was human, and her views of humanity in general were unchanged, but with him the deepest shadows glowed with reflected light, like the golden shadows of some rich Venetian picture.

The very nature of the faults he had, moreover, helped to dim her perceptions. He had, from

childhood, no vehement, impetuous outbursts of indignation, like those which I was liable to; no earnest, entire absorption of his whole being with the subject that interested him, to the forgetfulness of all besides, such as characterized Piers. His character had an external smoothness about it which made the world go smoothly with him. His characteristic motion was gliding: so easy and noiseless was this movement that it was only now and then it struck you that he always contrived to glide into the best place, and into the possession of the pleasantest things to be attained. We children, of course, who thus lost the pleasantest things and places, early perceived it; but to our elders it was scarcely ever apparent. It was always we who created the final disturbance; and what can any government do when there is a riot but punish the rioters, deferring the investigation as to who is in the wrong to a time when the riot and its causes have ceased to be of moment?

Francis was found in tranquil possession of the coveted delights, toy or picture-book, or place in the game; possession is nine points of the law; tranquillity the desideratum of all governments in the world; why could we not have left our little brother alone?

Thus we were, who were continually being thus tranquilly robbed and wronged, the perpetual plaintiffs, and the world has no mercy on perpetual plaintiffs. Francis, "poor little darling," as his mother truly said, "was never heard to raise

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his sweet little voice," while I at least was in one continual wail and clamor.

Even our father often gave the verdict against us. "The world was large," he would say, "and Francis was little; why did we just want the one thing the poor little fellow had set his heart on, and was so peaceably enjoying?"

In vain we pleaded rights which we knew to be unquestionable; what can be more tiresome, or seem more selfish, than to be always pleading one's rights, especially against what is apparently the weaker party?

"Why were we always shrieking about our rights? Brothers and sisters should not think about rights. They should be always ready 'to give up' to each other, and to do as they would be done by."

So, between my stepmother's fondness, my father's generosity, and interpretations of the Sermon on the Mount which drove me wild with the impossibility of combating them, and the certainty of their being wrong, the tyranny of our little brother was established.

This was a state of things, however, that could not long continue unbroken.

At length my stepmother once more proposed that Piers and I should be sent to Miss Felicity's school.

My father had long opposed this, having certain theories of education, I think partly derived

from Rousseau, not at all in harmony with Miss Felicity's.

He wished that education should be restored to what he considered its true meaning, of leading out the faculties, should be not so much a putting in as calling out, should be a development of growth from within, not the fitting on of an iron frame to contract and cramp growth from without. Theories which are now worn threadbare and colorless with discussion or not, were then fresh and full of bloom. And all such ideas Miss Felicity considered altogether chimerical and Utopian.

"Calling out faculties?" said she. "The only faculty she knew that could always be sure of coming at the call, was the faculty of mischief. No putting in? What then was the good of learning to read at all? She supposed Piers and I would not develop out of ourselves even the multiplication table, unless it was put into us, still less the history of the Greeks and Romans, or the gods and heroes. Not that she saw much use in history," she would somewhat cynically admit. "What was there in it but wise men's words and foolish men's deeds? things which, if they had happened in a neighbor's house instead of in palaces, you would have taken care the children did not hear. But the Greeks and Romans, and the gods and heroes, and the multiplication table, as the world was, had to be learned, and Mr. Danescombe might wait some time for a new world or

for a generation of children who came into it with their little minds filled already."

My poor father had certainly seen considerable faculty for not getting on developed in Piers and me since our little brother's arrival, and accordingly at last he waived his theory, and abandoned us to Miss Felicity and the rote system. To us the school meant simply Miss Felicity, and a very awful personality we considered her. My father was in the second stage of human progress, the age of philosophical system and theory; while Miss Felicity had advanced to the third, contemptuously ignoring systems and philosophies, and recognizing nothing but facts and phenomena; and Piers and I remained in the earliest, seeing nothing but persons and personifications.

From the beginning, I think, although most kindly disposed towards us, Miss Felicity nevertheless regarded us as rather dangerous little persons, brought up in no one knows what heretical persuasions concerning the rights and the wrongs of man.

The years of our school-life were among the most reactionary years England ever saw.

Not an abuse but was rooted in its place, and not a harvest of reform but was stunted and nipped by the French Reign of Terror.

Old Tories like Miss Felicity glorified their narrowest political prejudices into articles of the Creed, when the Revolution and his own personal patience had consecrated the French king into a

martyr. Benevolent and tranquil men of progress like my father had to defend themselves as if they had been Jacobins. Mild Whigs, like Dr. Kenton, who looked for the general improvement of the world on the same sanguine and genial principles on which he looked for the general recovery of his patients, simply turned a little round the other way, and became for the moment mild Tories.

"What do you say now, Dr. Kenton," Miss Felicity would triumphantly demand, "to your Reformers and Jacobins?"

"I say, Miss Felicity," he would reply, "what I always said. Above all things no convulsions, no violence to the constitution. If nature cannot throw off the ailment for herself, we must assist her a little, Miss Felicity, gently assist her. That is what I mean by reform. If our assistance fails, we must let her alone and wait, Miss Felicity, tranquilly wait."

Mild Tories, on the other hand, like my uncle Fyford and Mr. Rabbidge, those who were Conservative from fear, became rabid Tories, also from fear. They would have established a Reign of Terror of their own on behalf of our glorious constitution, would "keep the mob down, sir," said my uncle to my father, "by fire and sword, if necessary by the gibbet, or the—"

"*The stake,*" suggested my father dryly.

My uncle scarcely heeded the interruption. "Are we to have, our houses burnt about our

ears," he said, "by a set of fanatics calling themselves philanthropists and reformers?"

And it was through this tempest of prejudice and re-action that the noble band of religious men, who had set their hearts on abolishing the great wrong of the African slave-trade, steadfastly went on with the conflict, and ten times brought in the measure ten times defeated in a House of Commons, excited to a fury of reaction, elected by a nation goaded to a contempt of all progress by the fury and madness of the three years' terrible reaction against centuries of oppression in France.

It was, no doubt, this state of things, of course at the time unknown to us, which brought me into the two difficulties which now recur to my mind.

One sunny Sunday afternoon Piers and I were sitting on the step of our arbor on the highest terrace of the garden. He was playing with Pluto, and I was reading intently, with my elbows on my knees, so intently, that I did not see my father and my stepmother with little Francis, my uncle Fyford, and Dick approaching up the steep slope, until they were close at hand.

I was especially absorbed with the book because I ignorantly thought it was about to throw some light on the "Duty to our Neighbor," and the Sermon on the Mount, especially as connected with my stepmother and Francis, which might bring the Christian code within reach of my practice. There were passages in it about "natural

rights," about the "great sin being making each other unhappy," which I thought excellent; also a passage asserting that "the duty of man is not a wilderness of turnpike-gates between us and our Maker, through which we pass by ticket from one to the other, but plain and simple, consisting in our duty to God as His by *birth* and *family*, and in doing what we would be done by," which I thought clearer than the Catechism, at least with my stepmother's commentary.

My uncle startled me by an approving pat on the head.

"Well done, little maid! Quite a little Lady Jane Grey! Is it Plato, or The Whole Duty of Man?"

"It is not so much about our *duties* as about our *rights*," I said. "I found it in the Summer parlor." And I gave the volume confidingly into his hands.

He started as if he had been stung, dashed it from him to the ground, and ground his heel into it as if it had been a viper.

"Piers Dansecombe, I could not have expected this even of toleration like yours: Tom Paine's 'Rights of man'—such poison in the hands of this poor innocent babe."

"Indeed, uncle Fyford," I said, thinking that I had in some way compromised my father, "it is a Sunday book. It is not a story book. The gentleman who wrote it seems to dislike the Bastile and slaverv as much as father, and war as

much as Miss Loveday. And he speaks about our Father in heaven, uncle Fyford. Indeed it is a Sunday book."

"Listen to the poor innocent!" said uncle Fyford. "It is enough to pierce one's heart."

"Bride, my darling," said my father, in his dry quiet way, "Tom Paine's 'Rights of Man' is not exactly the book for you. If I had had any idea that your tastes lay in that direction, I would have labelled it, 'Not good for little girls.' But Richard," he continued, turning to my uncle, "if wise men would take the good in that book and use it, they would do more to neutralize the harm in it than by railing at it in a mass forever."

"Good in Tom Paine!" said my uncle, roused beyond his usual decorum. "I am sick of your '*good in everything*.' I believe you would find good in the devil."

"*There might have been!* you know," said my father, very gravely. His simple, quiet words startled me like a flash of lightning. They made me feel that he felt the existence of the devil to be a very real and sorrowful fact, instead of the half ridiculous, half terrible, mythical legend handed down to us in the nursery.

Mrs. Danescombe intervened.

"That is precisely what I am always saying to Mr. Danescombe, Dr. Fyford," she said. "Good in everything there may be, though I confess I have not found it, and I believe it is not the Bible, but only Shakespeare that asserts it. But evil in

everything most certainly there is, at least in every person. And I can never see we remove it by blinding our eyes to it."

"Well, Euphrasia," said my father, "you look for the evil and I for the good; so, between us, I hope we shall strike the balance. Only, if we both reach the better world, you will be so unfortunate as to have lost your occupation, while mine can continue for ever."

"Wait till you are there, Piers," rejoined my uncle. "At all events, you won't find Tom Paine's 'Rights of Man' there."

"No," replied my father, "the book will have done its work, good and evil, here below."

"Evil enough," said my uncle. "Good, only as Satan did good to Job by landing him, with his potsherd, among the ashes."

My investigations into the "natural rights" of man were, however, checked: a check the less painful to me because even Mr. Paine did not give me any light on the natural "rights of women" or of little girls. I was sent back to the Ten Commandments and to the Duty to my Neighbors.

The only result that remained from my inopportune pursuit of knowledge was the rare felicity of a little direct religious lesson from my father.

That evening he took me on his knee in the Oak parlor. Piers had gone to bed, and my step-mother was putting Francis to sleep, so that we were alone. And above us was that picture of my mother, present to the consciousness of us both.

"Bride, my darling," he said, "Duties are better things for us to think about than rights."

"If other people would only think about rights a little, father," I ventured to murmur, "then it would be very nice to have nothing to think about but our duties. But they don't. They only think about their own rights, and our duties."

"Very true, Bride," he said. "They don't, and they won't. And that is the way there is so much troublesome history for you and me to learn. But you know some one must begin. Suppose you and I begin at the other end. *Our own duties, and other people's rights.* You will find much more good come of it in the end."

Then, the only time I can remember, he led me to my mother's picture, and stood before it, with his hand on my shoulder.

"That was what she did, my child. God gave her one of his lambs to keep, and she kept it well as long as she was here. God help me to keep it for Him and for her better than I have."

"Oh, father, you can't keep us better," I said.

That lesson was brief, but it accomplished its end. It brought me back to my duties, instead of to his and to my stepmother's.

It was not very long after this that Piers and I fell into another difficulty, at Miss Felicity's school.

I remember this with especial distinctness, because it was the beginning of Piers and my entering into closer relations with Amice Glanvil and sweet bright Claire Angélique des Ormes.

A week before, the three spare rooms in Miss Felicity's house had been engaged and occupied by three foreigners, refugees from France, Madame la Marquise des Ormes, her little daughter Claire Angélique, and Léontine, a vivacious maid, who governed and protected them both, and would fain have governed Miss Felicity, and all Abbot's Weir, had this been possible to any Frenchwoman.

Madame had only been seen, a slight fragile lady, leaning rather feebly on the arm of Léontine, and greeting Miss Felicity as she entered the arched door with such a courtly reverence as Abbot's Weir had not previously dreamed of.

Léontine had been seen and heard abundantly, making her presence felt like a wind through house and town. Little Claire had only been heard prattling in a sweet voice to her mother in the parlor inside the schoolroom until that momentous afternoon when she appeared under Miss Felicity's wing, but not under her rod, as a kind of amateur scholar.

It was an August afternoon, very sultry. The room was long and low; Miss Felicity was fettered by no government regulations as to cubic feet of air and space. Of space there was enough; of air certainly not enough to keep forty children awake. Miss Felicity would on no account have exposed her lessons to the intrusion of the street by opening the window.

Want of ozone, therefore, was telling powerfully on the intellects of the pupils, and on the

temper of the mistress. The flies were drowsily buzzing now and then against the panes, the black cat sleepily purring on the window-seat, too lazy even to wink at my stepmother's cat on the opposite window. Many of the children out of reach of the rod had yielded to sleep, and the rest were hopelessly struggling against it, when the question came in a sharp voice from Miss Felicity—

“Bridget Danescombe, who were the heroes?”

I must have been half asleep myself, for I remember instantly sitting up trying to look especially wide awake, as is the wont of persons so surprised, and responding desperately to the last word which I had caught.

“Father says there are some in France, Miss Felicity. He said so last night. They pulled down a wicked place called the Bastile.”

Miss Felicity's color rose. I think she did not know whether I said it in simplicity or in malice.

“Bridget Danescombe,” she repeated, slightly rapping my fingers to recall my attention, “think what you are saying. Who were the *heroes*?”

“And some, father said, there are in England,” I continued, divided between anxiety to sustain myself by that infallible judgment, and dread of the well-known little ebony ruler. “They want to pull down the slave-trade and the impressment—he said impressment. These are our Bastiles. I know he said they were heroes. And the only name I remember is Granville Sharpe.”

“Silly child, dreaming as usual,” said Miss Fe-

licity, diplomatically passing by the perilous answer, and admonishing me by a severe rap on my knuckles. "I pass to your brother—two years your younger and ten years your better. Piers Danescombe, who were the heroes?"

Whatever could have been thought of the spirit of my answer, there could have been no doubt as to that which rang through the tones of Piers. His was a response, not to Miss Felicity's question, but to her rap on my fingers.

"Sister Bride is right, Miss Felicity," he said. "Father did say so, only last night."

By this time the little community was thoroughly aroused, with true British instinct scenting the battle from afar.

"Yes, indeed, Miss Felicity," I ventured, "father said impressing seamen and trading in slaves was as bad as shutting people up in the Bastile, and Mr. Granville Sharpe was a hero for trying to stop it. I remember quite well that was the hero's name, and also that he wants to stop people having slaves, because that is wicked."

I had rushed on impetuously, forgetful of all but the purpose in hand, when, looking up, I saw Amice Glanvil's great mysterious eyes fixed fully on me, not in anger, but with a look of grave wonder and questioning.

She looked a shade more pallid than usual, but I flushed crimson. I remembered the black nurse and the negro footmen, and I felt so sorry I should have said anything to grieve my princess.

But I had not much time for reflection. For then out and spoke Dick Fyford.

“Miss Felicity, if Bride Danescombe were not a girl, so that no one can do anything to her, she would not dare. My own uncle is a sea captain, and I am going to sea, and he says people who cry out against impressment are traitors and fools. I heard him. The king's navy could not be kept up without, and then the French would come and kill the king and burn up London, and Abbot's Weir, and all of us.”

The conflict was becoming perilous. Was Miss Felicity's class of mythology—extra—to prepare the more aristocratic classes for Mr. Rabbidge, and to distinguish them from the common herd, to end in this?

Had not Mrs. Rabbidge, always a little too eagerly alive to the growth of Miss Felicity's pupils into her husband's, denounced the mythology as a poaching on his demesnes? And had not Mr. Rabbidge himself mildly admitted that Miss Felicity was meddling with matters too high for her?

And was it to be said that such frightful Jacobinism had been uttered in her presence unavenged?

The case was perplexing. On the score of politics it could not be taken up. Piers and I had appealed to Cæsar in the person of our father, and to Miss Felicity paternal authority was a foundation of all other authority, by no means to be lightly interfered with.

She therefore recurred to history, and wisely chose to treat me as a dunce rather than as a heretic.

"Bridget Danescombe knows better," she asserted. "The heroes lived in Greece. They come after the heathen gods. There were Hercules and Perseus,—and others," said Miss Felicity, not having a book, and judiciously becoming vague. They fought with dragons. And the heroes and the dragons have all been dead and gone thousands of years. Bridget Danescombe, I am sorry; but I must put the fool's-cap on you, and you must sit on that stool in the middle of the school. Take this book and learn the names of the heroes. When you have learned them you may come down."

And so saying, she took off my little mob-cap, put on the terrible cone of brown paper, and made me climb on a tall stool. Thus were the germs of Jacobinism crushed; and thus was I set up as a beacon to juvenile Abbot's Weir. Piers came and stood beside me, his eyes flashing and his face crimson, in defiance of authority. Wisely, Miss Felicity took no notice. Her government was too strong for her to delight in petty, irritating revenge.

I was too proud to cry, and too bewildered by anger and shame to learn. And yet by some strange instinct of justice I made a distinction between my stepmother and Miss Felicity.

My stepmother had never rapped my knuck-

les, or set me on a stool, or punished me in any way; and yet her cold "Bridget!" hurt me more than Miss Felicity's ruler, or even her fool's-cap, terrible as that was.

I felt that Miss Felicity, in some unaccountable way, had misunderstood my words. I did not feel that she misunderstood and misjudged me. And, after a little while, getting used to my position, I found myself endeavoring to account, not for *my* conduct (in this instance I had the great and unusual happiness of a clear conscience), but for Miss Felicity's, and to justify her.

This, of course, did not help me to learn my "heroes," but it quieted my mind, and the book served as a veil as I held it before my face.

And so the minutes passed on, until the bell rang for the school to close.

We always finished in the morning with the grace before meals, and in the evening with a verse of evening prayer.

For this purpose Miss Felicity told me to come down from my elevation.

To this instant my heart beats faster as I think how that sweet little French girl Claire, not of course being in the awe of our punishments and rules of ordinary scholars, glided forward to me before any one could stop her, with her easy French grace, and helped me down, and kissed my cheek, her first kiss, with the fool's-cap still on, and led me to Miss Felicity, and asked her in

sweet broken English to take the cap off, which Miss Felicity very kindly and rather nervously did. And then Claire herself, with her lissome fingers, arranged my hair under my little cap, and kissed my quivering lips, for I was bursting into tears. Then, apparently summoned from the room within, she waved her hand to all of us and courtesied like a fairy queen, and disappeared within the door of her mother's apartment.

Piers and I, of course, were kept in that day, until I had learned the mythology. And meantime Miss Felicity went out and left us alone, with Amice Glanvil, who was kneeling on the window-seat, waiting for the negro nurse.

When Miss Felicity was gone, Amice came down noiselessly from the window-seat, and suddenly stood before me.

I looked up from the book, and met those dark wistful eyes for the first time, not turned away from me, but gazing steadily into mine, through my eyes, I felt, into me.

"Who said it was *wicked to have slaves?*" she asked.

My eyes sank before her gaze.

"It was my father," I said in a low voice. I wished to say something in excuse, but I could find nothing.

"But people need *not* be wicked who have slaves," she said. "My father was good, and he had slaves. And he is dead. He was not wicked.

And I was born with slaves. How can we help what we are born with?"

She spoke very low, with a deep voice and a clear lingering utterance, which to me sounded foreign. The question was beyond me.

"You can be kind to them," I said, feebly. That was all I could think of.

"Some old Greek people set them free!" said Piers, thoughtfully, more childlike than I; "that is what my father said Mr. Granville Sharpe wanted. You can *set them free*," he said, with a boy's directness, "that is the only way, I think, of being kind to slaves."

Amice Glanvil turned her penetrating glance on him, as if to look him through; but his frank, blue eyes met hers with a steady gaze, and bore the scrutiny.

"*Set them free!* Piers Danescombe," she said. "You do not know in the least what you are talking about. But you have given me the answer at the very bottom of your thoughts, and I thank you." For she was not in the least like a child, our princess.

The negro nurse came to fetch her, and interrupted our conversation.

But when she was wrapped up in her gold and crimson splendors, she turned back to us and took one of our hands in each of hers.

"Bride Danescombe," she said, "I like you. I have known and liked you a long time, and I like you better to-day. Piers Danescombe, you are a

little boy, and do not know in the least what you said. But you speak the truth, and hardly any one does. And I like you too. I will ask Granny. And you will come and see me. Good-bye."

I felt honored as by a royal invitation; but Piers was cooler, and said, "We will see."

I got upon the window-seat and looked after Miss Amice in a flutter of delight. I forgot all about the heroes. I felt sure I had found my heroine. The spell of silent years was broken; our princess had spoken to us, and the enchanted palace would be sure to open.

Then a soft voice called me from the corner where little Miss Loveday had been lying on her couch, correcting exercises, unobserved by any of us.

"Dear child," she said, "dear little Bride, let me help thee. Aunt Felicity will come back, and thou wilt have learned nothing."

In a few minutes she had taught me the lesson.

And when Miss Felicity returned, I said it to her perfectly.

I think she was anxious to make some amends to me. I had suffered as a victim to great public considerations, as I did not know, but she did. But I felt there was no personal wrong intended, and I felt no resentment against her. And when she took my hand kindly, and said I had a good father and mother, and she hoped I would be a good little girl, I took courage, and looking up in

her face said, "Miss Felicity, father said *you* were one of the heroes, too."

"Nonsense! nonsense, child!" she said, coloring. But I saw that the keen eyes moistened, and she took me to Miss Loveday and said, in a treasured voice—

"Loveday, the child grows more like her poor dear mother every day—I saw it on that stool today—and she has just that sweet, forgiving temper. And, please God, the poor little maid shall never stand there again. It was a mistake of mine, and it cut me to the heart. There," she added, laughing, "there's a foolish thing for a mistress to say to a child. Foolish old woman and foolish little Bride. How shall I keep you in order now? You will never be afraid of the ruler and the fool's-cap more."

But I began to *love* Miss Felicity. And oh, the good it did me to hear a grown-up woman actually confess she had made a mistake and done wrong!

It restored to me my ideal of justice. It made me feel there was *one* right way for little children and grown people.

From that day I would not have offended or grieved Miss Felicity for the world.

But when she left the room Miss Loveday put her arm around me and said—

"Little Bride, it is quite right to learn about the old heroes. All little boys and girls must. But never thou give up believing in the heroes

and saints *now*. That is the great matter for us. Never give up looking for them, little Bride, and always expecting to see them. It is a pity not to know the heroes of long ago. But the most terrible mistake we can make, any of us, is not to learn to know the heroes and saints God is making to-day, who are with us now, because that is like misunderstanding God himself, and our dear Lord and Saviour, and putting Him far back into history, among the Greeks and Romans.

"Never think the saints and heroes are all dead and gone, Piers and Bride. It is like thinking our Lord is dead, and his living Spirit with us no more. That is the mistake people who went wrong, made in every age. Look for them, expect to find them in the world—in your little world—now, and look to God, who is always making them, and you will find them. And then stick close to them, my dears, and follow them, whatever they are called and whatever they look like; and, in that way, you may grow like them too. Oh, thank God, Bride," she added in a low voice, "I did ask God long ago for this; and He heard me, and showed me your mother. He showed her to me before she went away. And that has helped me all my life. Never, never think the saints and heroes are living no longer upon earth. The heroes are not dead, nor the dragons; nor are the saints gone to heaven, or their crosses. Look up and keep your heart open and upward, and you

will find them—and them all, my poor little ones, never fear.”

I tried to say something to her, but I could not. My voice would not come.

For, when father had said Miss Felicity was a hero, he had said also that Miss Loveday was a saint.

But I smiled all through my heart as I went across to the market-place, to think how much sooner than Miss Loveday had expected her words had begun to come true.



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CHAPTER IX.

THERE are many mornings in our lives, many moments which are as fountains, from which the rest of life continues to flow.

The old promise has been kept. Day and night, winter and summer, seed-time and harvest, have not failed.

And hereafter, also, (I trust) it will be thus. It is in a pagan Elysium, not in a Christian Paradise, that "everlasting spring" abides.

What are blossoms that never ripen into fruit but painted shows? What is childhood which never awakens into manhood but a dwarfed or undeveloped humanity? What are seed-times which have no harvest but promises perpetually renewed and never fulfilled?

"*No night there*" must mean no darkness, no bewilderment, no losing our way, no missing our end, no horror of doubt, no shadow of death; certainly not, no fresh mornings. So often we confuse divine suggestions by vulgarizing symbols in-

to pictures, or by hammering out poetical images into prosaic parables!

Again and again in our lives "God takes us by the hand," as the old Moravian hymn sings, "and says, start afresh."

Here, indeed, our fresh startings are made necessary, too often, by our wanderings from the way, or our weariness of the way. But the fullness of life there will surely not be less rich in variety and glorious growth than the hindered and fluctuating and failing life here. For ever it will be walking in "newness of life." O wondrous fullness of joy, when all the past shall enrich, not burden and sadden, the present; when before the heart, satisfied with the present in His presence, shall spread endless ranges of hope in the unveiled future, also in His presence!

We shall not be gods hereafter, but children of God; and, forever, in our Father's hand, will be infinite possibilities of growth unforeseen by us, and divine surprises of bliss.

One such morning, or fountain head, in my life was that memorable afternoon when Miss Felicity exalted me to the stool of repentance and crowned me with the fool's-cap, and afterwards exalted herself and human nature in my sight by confessing herself in the wrong, and crowned me with the kiss of reconciliation, which sealed me her loyal subject thereafter.

For then and there three great friendships of my life began: that dear discipleship to Loveday

Benbow—that tender affection to Claire des Ormes, half motherly, half lover-like—that faithful “cameraderie” with Amice Glanvil in many a pull “against the stream.”

Before that day, in looking back, it seems as if life had still been cradled in the mountain tarn, mirroring the little world around, filling its own little cup. After that it began to flow.

And not mine, but my brother’s also, which was in many ways more than my own to me. Our lives began to flow; and they began to part, into those two streams of womanhood and manhood which are each one so much more for being two,—so much more to each other, so much more to the world.

In the first place, it was just after that morning that for the first time I remember Piers took an opposite course to me.

When, in due time, the invitation came for us from Madam Glanvil to spend a holiday with Amice at Court, he would not go.

He was not quite ten, and I was not quite thirteen. I had in my small way been “a mother to him” for so many years. His refusal surprised me greatly.

My father did not seem displeased at Piers declining; indeed, he appeared to wonder a little at my delight in accepting.

Mrs. Danescombe, on the contrary, commended me. She said it was a very desirable house to

visit at, and she was pleased to see me appreciate it.

"It is a big house certainly, Bride," said my father; "but you know we do not grow bigger by being in big houses."

"Mr. Danescombe," remonstrated my step-mother, "let me entreat you not to teach Jacobinism to Bride: for girls at least it cannot be suitable."

"It is not the house, father," I said; "it is Amice."

"Amice, with the glory of the big house about her," he said, "and the black servants, and the sedan-chair. How long have you known Miss Glanvil?"

"Oh, father," I said, "all our lives long."

"A very extensive period," he said. "I did not know you had ever spoken to each other."

"No, not exactly *spoken* until yesterday," I said, "but *looked*, and understood each other always."

He laughed and said no more.

But in the evening I endeavored to shake Piers's resolution.

We were sitting in that very miscellaneous lumber-room, music-room, and workshop of my father's, called the Summer parlor.

I was planning Armadas, and talking of great naval campaigns. (We were just at the outbreak of the first war with the French Republic.) Piers was constructing a little ship; a division of labor

frequent between us. He was essentially a maker, not a critic, except as far as criticism is necessary to construction. While I was content with anything that would float, his quick eye caught the angles and curves which made the difference between swift and slow sailing. He was never satisfied until the little vessel was as perfect as his accurate hands could make it. I believe from early years he had an opinion that the talking of the world is mostly to be done by women, and by men who cannot, or will not, work.

"You will not go to Court, Piers," I said. "It never can be because Amice called you a 'little boy?'"

He laughed.

"How like a girl, sister!" he said (not satirically; I never heard him say a satirical thing in his life, his nature was too downright and too sweet). Later in life I know he thought satire only the poor refuge of people who could not fight the battles—"not like *you*! What difference can calling me anything make? Besides, I am a little boy, rather; and I like Amice Glanvil. She is almost as good as a boy herself."

Feminine and masculine distinctions were becoming very pronounced. My protectorate was evidently tottering; and also I felt a little jealous.

"I don't believe boys like girls better for being like boys," I said; "at least only quite little boys do. Claire des Ormes is not like a boy, at all events; and I am sure you like her."

"She is not like a boy or a girl, or anything," he replied.

"Less?" I said.

"No, you know very well, sister," he said, "*more!*"

"Yes, I think so," I said. "When she kissed me, it felt as if it had been the queen. What *is* she like? A fairy? or a princess? or an angel? or a hero?"

"How can we tell, sister? We never saw either. Only it would be worth while to do something for her, like what she did for you."

"Yes," I said, "it would. But there is nothing to do."

"Something always comes to do," he said, "when we are ready."

It was a cheerful view of life, and more axiomatic than Piers knew.

We had wandered from Amice and Court.

"And you will not go to Court? Not if father wishes it?"

"Father does not care," he said.

Which I knew was true.

"Not to see Amice? who is nearly as good as a boy, and all those wonderful monkeys, and parrots, and models, and museums?"

"I can see Amice at school," he said.

"Oh, Piers, why won't you? Not with *me*?"

"Sister Bride, I *cannot*," he said. "I cannot be waited on by slaves."

We had heard so many stories of the wrongs and cruel hardships of slavery!

I had cried over them so many times; and planned so many wonderful schemes of rescue; and had sometimes thought Piers rather lukewarm on the subject.

And meantime, the griefs which had melted into tearful dewdrops with me, had been entering into his very heart.

I could say no more.

So I went alone to Court.

It was more awful than I expected. I was met at the door by the two black footmen, and ushered with bows through the hall, museum, and dining-room, into the large withdrawing-room.

No one was there; and alone in those great stately rooms, among the ancestral portraits and the ancestral chairs, and the Japanese cabinets: alone, without Piers to matronize, I felt a very little girl indeed. And that uncomfortable consciousness of clothes not quite duly identified with me, which through my stepmother's monitions had become the spectre of my darker moments, came on me irrepressibly.

Only until Amice came in, and by her presence filled the grand old rooms with life, not rising or gushing, by any means, but with that essential reality and absence of self-consciousness about her which always made everything of the

nature of clothes and conventionalities sink into their due subordination.

That, I suppose, was partly what Piers meant by her being like a boy.

She came forward and took my hand.

"Where is Piers," she said, "your little brother?"

My eyes fell.

"He could not—did not—come," I said, in some confusion.

"*Would* not," she said, decidedly. "He is a strange little boy, but I like him."

She seemed to me rather candid about my kindred.

"He is the dearest brother in the world," I said.

"No doubt," she said, "to you. He is your own. You are not in the least alike. But I like *you*."

She never asked if we liked her.

"You have another brother who is not like either of you," she said, "very little. I do not like him. He looks as if he had been born old."

That was unfortunate, for my stepmother, I knew, looked on my friendship at Court as an introduction for Francis.

I began to think her confidences as to the family had better stop.

But she continued.

"I like your father; he is a gentleman, although he does think it wicked to have slaves. I

am glad your mother is only your stepmother. She is like your little brother. And I always want her to be well tossed about in a wind. A storm at sea would be best. That shakes one out of many things."

It was very curious to find we had all been looked at and through so long, by those wistful, inquiring eyes.

And here was a new and most interesting glimpse into her former life!

"You have been in a storm at sea! That must be wonderful," I said, not sorry to reverse the telescope and turn it on her own life.

"Yes. I liked it," she said; "especially when it was dangerous."

She had her hat in her hand; she put it on and led me into the garden.

"The waves were very high?" I asked.

"It was not the waves I liked," she replied, "it was the people. It was as good as the play, indeed, it was much better, because it was the other way. Every one changed characters—changed into themselves. It was great fun. People who had told wonderful stories of their killing lions and tigers, and frightening slaves, turned quite white, and wrung their hands, and kept questioning the captain, like women, if there was any danger? And one man, who had laughed at the Methodists, and had sworn big oaths, actually came and asked my poor Chloe to pray for him. It was capital fun."

I began to think her rather elfish and hard-hearted—"cynical" I should have said had I known the word.

"Chloe is a Methodist," I replied, rather evasively. I know a Methodist, too, old Reuben Pengelly."

"Yes," she said; "the old man with the violoncello, in a scarlet waistcoat. Chloe loves him like a brother. And Chloe heard from him about you. He loves you all so much. Only Granny won't let her go often to the meetings. She says it gives those poor creatures notions."

"What notions?" I said, rising out of my lifelong awe of Amice with some indignation. "No one would get anything but good notions from Reuben."

"Good notions for white people, very likely," she replied; "but white people and black are not the same. At least, so Granny says. I am not sure; however, it makes very little difference to Chloe. For she has her notions, wherever she is, and they make her very happy."

"What notions make her happy?" I asked.

"That God is very good, and loves every one, black and white. That He can make black people have white hearts," she replied softly. "It makes her very happy. But I cannot quite see it. At least if I were black I should find it difficult to think God had cared much, or taken much trouble about me."

"I did not see it once," I said, "till Reuben showed me."

"Did not see *what?*" she said, looking full into my eyes.

"That God was good to *me*," I said.

"To *you!*" she replied, rather scornfully.

"Then you must certainly have been very cross and ungrateful. I can see that plainly enough. You have a father and a brother!"

"He had taken away *Mother!*" I said. It nearly choked me to say it, but I felt I must. "And I *was* ungrateful, and did not understand Him. But I do now!"

She smiled a little peculiar smile of her own, sarcastic but not severe.

"*Understand God!*" she said, with a strange depth in her tone. "That is a good deal for a little girl. You are a year younger than I am. Reuben told Chloe."

"Understand that He is my Father, and is good, always," I said, "to every one."

"That is a good deal too!" she said; "more than I do. But Chloe does. She says our Saviour let a black man carry his cross. I am not quite sure of that. Because, they were not all black then in Africa, the history says. That is the worst of history. It disturbs so many nice notions. But Chloe knows nothing of history, at least only that one History. And it comforts her to think of that black man carrying the cross. Why, I can't exactly see, even if it is true."

"Ah, Amice, I can see!" I said. "Wouldn't you have liked to carry it for Him?"

She paused a moment, and then said, very slowly and gravely,

"If He had given it to me. But He did not. It was only the Romans."

"It is almost always the Romans or the Jews who do lay things like that on people," I said. "But it was *His* cross. Ah, I do think I should have liked that! To have helped Him a little!"

"I think you would," she said, with a sort of tenderness that had not been in her voice before. "I would rather have beaten off the Jews and the soldiers."

"I should not like to have been the Romans!" she added, very low and sadly. "Do you think any one *can* be like that now?" she asked, with one of her sudden, inquiring looks, as if she would surprise an answer out of one's eyes.

The whole meaning flashed on me, and I was dumb.

"Because," she said, "if *that* history is always going on, you see, as Chloe seems to think, there must always be the two sides, and one would like to be sure on which side one is."

"Do you care for flowers?" she resumed, changing her tone and subject suddenly. "I don't; unless they are wild. Furze and heather on the down, when one is galloping over it, are nice. But in beds they are tiresome. And espe-

cially in green-houses—mere *things* in pots. It is dreadful to have to grow up. When I am seventeen I shall have to show Granny's visitors round the green-houses, and listen to them saying how gorgeous this flower is, and how lovely that leaf is, on and on for ever. Animals are what I like. They are so queer, and yet so fond of one. And one can so easily make them happy. And they have no souls, which is a great comfort, when creatures belong to one; it saves one from so much perplexity. At least no souls that can be lost; no conscience; that is the troublesome thing. Are you sure they have not souls of some kind? Dogs now, and some horses, look as if they had some kind of souls *growing* in them, something *beginning* to be a soul. Don't you think so?"

I had never speculated on the psychology of animals. My chief personal attachments had been among cats, except, indeed, Pluto.

"I certainly never thought my stepmother's cat had a soul," I said. "If it has, it must be such a very bad one, I am sure I hope it hasn't. And I am sure it has no conscience. Nor my own kittens. They purr and rub against one, and are so soft and comfortable that I never thought of their wanting anything more."

"Cats? Certainly not!" she replied, decidedly. "I always think one could have made a cat oneself almost. All fur and purr, and wanting to be stroked. That is, *some* cats. There are others, like tigers, all cunning, and stealth, and

spite, one could *not* have made, *would* not if one could. Ah, Bride! (may I call you Bride? It is so much more like you than Bridget) how many puzzles there are! Does it not seem as if the devil must have created some things?"

"The devil *create* anything!" I said indignantly. "No! God—the good God—created everything, and created everything good."

"It is not all very good just now," she said, shaking her head. "At all events, the devil has spoiled a great deal."

All this was said at intervals, as she was showing me round the place, garden, rabbit-hutches, pheasantry, poultry-yard, her own horse in the stables, where the great bloodhound fawned on her, and the large staghound put his paws on her shoulders in a rapture of welcome.

"There!" she said, "down, Leo! poor fellow! Dogs one certainly could never have made."

"Some creatures love me, Bride, you see," she added. "I am not sure that *you* do. You think me too like a boy. You see, I was the only child, there was no son, only a daughter, and I have to do for both."

She did care, then, to be loved. So daring and apparently independent, yet so sensitive to every change of feeling in those she cared about—she, too, had need of love, as much as I had.

For I had been feeling just a little doubtful about her; and she knew it as well as if I had said

all I felt, in plainer words than I could have found.

We came to the kitchen garden.

"I like this," she said. "The vegetables have something to do. They are not like the flowers, fine ladies living to be looked at. Especially geraniums and dahlias, and camellias. They are as if they were stiffening into wax-work. Some of the flowers are just sweet and lovely because they cannot help it; and so natural and full of life, no gardeners can spoil them. Roses, lilies of the valley, the great white queen-lily, and violets. But vegetables, poor things, are always doing their best in an honest and simple way, and not thinking about themselves. And the flowers in kitchen gardens are always the nicest, don't you think? I suppose the company of the useful humble creatures improves them."

Then she led me silently to a mouldy little arbor in an angle of the wall.

"Don't you hate arbors?" she said. "They are the most ridiculous things. They are neither open air nor indoors. And I hate all things and people that are neither one thing nor another. There is Clapham, for instance; stuck-up houses and bits of gardens always trying to look like country. How I should hate to live there; although your hero, Mr. Granville Sharpe, does live there, and other people who are something like him!"

How much she had seen! Clapham, I knew,

was near London. My father had a first cousin there, to whom one day we were to pay a visit.

"What is it in you, Bride Danescombe, that makes me like you, and say everything I ought and I ought not out to you? You don't say much. And I am sure you don't always like what I say. But you know it is quite useless for me to seem somebody else, and then wake up and find it was not me."

I wanted to say how much I liked her. But I could say nothing.

"Now," she said, with a little monosyllabic laugh. (She never laughed in peals, only with her lips and eyes, and that one little quiet musical dropping of laughter.) "I will show you my likeness. I have kept it for you since the day you called Granville Sharpe a hero."

And from a corner of the seat she took a little crocus-bulb. It had a curious long appendage to it like an ivory knitting-needle. "I found it, lying forgotten and forlorn, in a piece of turned-up ground," she said. "It could not get anything to root itself in, in any natural, proper way, like other crocuses; and so it shot down this ugly thing, feeling and feeling for something to twist its roots about. *And at last it found something.*"

"Oh, Amice, Amice," I said, feeling those motherly wings fluttering all warm in my heart once more. "You mean you found *me*? *Me!*"

And I knelt down and put my arms all around her, and hid my head in her lap, and began to cry.

"I do love you. We have liked you so long, Piers and I. But oh, indeed, you want more than me. What am I?"

"You are a good, dear little soul," she said; "as kind as old Leo or poor Chloe. And with a kind of soul and conscience which makes you, on the whole, better than Leo, especially as I have nothing to do with it."

And she gave me such a long kiss, and such a long, close hug—her whole heart seemed to come into mine.

"There! what would Granny say? She would call it a 'scene.' And Mrs. Danescombe? All your pretty feathers ruffled as if you had been in a south-wester. Come in and preen yourself, and Chloe shall help you."

Then again, with that quick sympathetic interpretation—"Not Chloe? Well, then, *I* will. But you may tell your little brother, Chloe is *not* a slave. There are no slaves in England now. Your Mr. Granville Sharpe got that settled years ago, as you might have known, if he is such a hero, and you such lovers of blacks."

On our way in we met Madam Glanvil, as she was usually called in Abbot's Weir.

I had never seen her before, except at church, or in state in her coach. And now she was in her ordinary attire, a plain, closely-fitting woollen dress (woven in the cottage-looms of Abbot's Weir), rather short, with a hood, all grey—not Miss Love-

day's grey, dove-like, but hard, prosaic, black-and-white grey.

A very fine, erect, manly old lady, pacing through her fields and gardens in stout leather boots, with her steward.

"Granny is like me," said Amice. "Since my grandfather died, she has to do for both."

Described in color, her whole effect was steel-grey, as Loveday Benbow's was dove-color. Her eyes were steel-grey, with clear, steely gleams, and also stormy, thunderous flashes.

She looked me all over, not, however, in a way which made me conscious of clothes. Then she nodded, rather approvingly, and then she said—

"Go in and get ready for dinner. You have seven minutes. Do you think I can wait for children?"

"She says whatever she likes, and no one can answer her," said Amice. "She is deaf, you know—so deaf that she never hears anything but what she likes, so that it is quite useless to be angry or to defend one's self. But she likes you, I see from her nod. Granny's nod is like Jupiter's, you know, in the Homer; so don't be afraid."

The dinner was silent. And again, the weight of the big rooms, and the black footman stepping as softly as my stepmother's cat, and the plate, and the Nankin china, like our very best, which was never used—were a little oppressive to me.

After dinner Madam Glanvil settled herself to her nap in a great chair by the window, and told

us to go and amuse ourselves. But ere she spread the Bandana silk handkerchief over her face, to keep off the flies (of which she spoke in language so strong it sounded to me rather like swearing), she called me to her.

"Stand there in the light, Bridget Danescombe," she said, "and let me look at you."

There was something in her direct, imperious way which rather amused me; and not feeling under her sceptre, I stood fearless, looking up occasionally into her grey eyes, wondering what she would say or do next.

"That will do, child," she said, with her Jupiter nod. "You may go away and play. You are like your father, except bits of you that I don't know—your eyes and eyebrows. I suppose they are your mother's. The Danescobes are not a bad stock to come of, as old a family as any in the county, only on the wrong side, generally, as to politics, when there *were* politics worth thinking or fighting about; the older branch, but Parliamentarians: the younger branch managed better, stuck to the king, and are in the House of Peers. And I hear your father is following the family ways—Whig or even Jacobin, or one of those philanthropists who are worse, always minding other people's duties. Don't flush and blush, child. People cannot help what they inherit. I have no opinion of people who change their family politics or religion; although it is a pity for them, of course, if they happen to be wrong. Your father

is a gentleman, and a Danescombe—Danescombe of Danescombe. The pedigree is right enough. One thing I regret. He should not have gone into trade; though, certainly, younger branches and decayed branches sometimes must. It is better than begging, or than that vile law. I've seen enough of that—always leading one on, and turning against one, and making charges for talking and writing. Beggary! And the king's service certainly does not pay, or the Church, unless there is a family living. However, that's no affair of yours. You may come here whenever you like, and Amice likes. Only don't flush and blush, or throw yourself into raptures. And if Amice lends you a horse, which she may, to ride over the Down together, don't be nervous and throw it down, as town children are apt to do. And, if you can help it, don't be a philanthropist. I will have nothing to do with philanthropists. You look a sensible little maid, but rather soft and melting—the kind of stuff those people are made of. And being in the family, it is dangerous—infectious, too. And, remember, I will have nothing to do with philanthropists. There, go and play, or ride, or anything you like."

And drawing the Bandana handkerchief over her face, she dismissed us.

"But," I said to Amice when we were alone, "it is a little trying that your grandmother should be deaf just in that way. It makes one feel dishonest not to answer her, especially when she says

things about other people. If my father is what she calls a philanthropist, I am sure the last thing he does is to mind other people's duties. The motto he gave me was, 'Other people's rights, and our own duties.' Is it quite impossible to make your grandmother understand? at least about father?"

"Quite," said Amice. "And if she did hear that motto, she would not like him any better for that. She would think he meant it was his duty to look after people's rights and wrongs; and that is exactly what she objects to, as to the black people you are all so fond of. But I like the motto, Bride. Only, it might lead one, no one can tell where; at least *me*."

The nearer I came to Amice the deeper the mystery in her seemed. It was like wandering through a great northern pine forest, in the twilight; glimpses here and glimmerings there, and everything seeming to lead into a new infinity.

What had the shadows been which had lain so deep in her early life that they had made the faith natural to her a Manichean dualism? that terrible faith always ready to spring on us from the darkness of sin and sorrow, that evil is co-eternal with good, and in might perhaps eo-equal.



CHAPTER X.



WHOLE ocean of new life and thought was open to us through the advent of Madame la Marquise des Ormes, Claire, and Léontine. There was also an Abbé, madame's brother, who occasionally appeared, but preferred to live in a large seaport town about fifteen miles off. M. l'Abbé, like many of his countrymen, was not complimentary to his land of refuge. He said the most comprehensible thing to him in the character of the English was their passion for the sea. He could for himself see no way of living in such an island of "*brouillard*" and "*bourgeoisie*," except by keeping constantly in view the one means of escape from it.

Among the four we had brought before us four sufficiently characteristic phases of the France of our day.

Madame was Royalist to the core, with the chivalrous old French royalty which the death of Louis XVI. and Marie Antoinette enkindled into a passion and exalted into a religion. Monarchy and martyrdom united had surrounded the son of

Saint Louis with a halo so mystically interwoven of earthly and heavenly splendors, that to see prosaic fact through it would have passed the penetration of any mortal vision. In the later days of Louis XIV., and through the reign of Louis XV., her family had lived a good deal in retirement on their estates. The ladies of the race especially had not shared in the sins and splendors of that corrupting court, but had lived in familiar and gracious intercourse with their peasantry, never contemplating the possibility of a state of things in which great ladies could do anything but reign and distribute alms, and peasants desire anything but rapturously to receive alms and serve.

That there could be any great fundamental wrong in the nature of things, which made it the highest hope of the majority of laboring men to end life as dependent pensioners on the bounty of the minority, never occurred to them. How could it have done so?

Such wrongs intertwined with the innermost fabric of society are, I suppose, seldom perceived from within, until the slow growth of abuse at last interferes with some elementary law of gravitation or cohesion, and the whole edifice crumbles into decay or crashes into revolution.

Pesides, unfortunately, it is precisely those who would most gladly correct such abuses who naturally come least in contact with them. Their own virtues clear the region immediately around them, and if anxious and foreboding politicians talk

of "Augean stables," they reply, incredulously, and correctly, "Was ever stall cleaner swept than mine?"

Madame des Ormes from the first seemed to single out our family. She was sure there was French blood in our veins—the highest compliment she could pay; there was a peculiar curve of the eyebrow in my mother's picture and in me, never seen in pure English faces. It was true. My mother's grandfather had been one of the exiles in the Huguenot persecution. Ours was the only house in the town she volunteered to enter. My stepmother she considered a little "*bourgeoise*," but my father's manners she approved. Some people's manners, she said, were too much for them. Like badly made dresses, you could never forget that they had them on; and some people were unfortunate enough to have no manners at all. In the last category she included Madam Glanvil, who was the only person I remember her speaking of with a single tinge of hauteur.

Her natural social level was that of the Countess of Abbot's Weir. And I well remember the glory reflected on Madame and Claire, and even on Léontine, when the Countess' coach stopped at Miss Felicity's door, and the Earl and Countess went up into Madame's apartment.

I never knew what happened at Court. Madame, with M. l'Abbé and Claire, had been invited there with all ceremony, and entertained with all

state; and Claire told me Madam Glanvil had offered to have them driven home in the family coach. But her mother had declined. "She was only a poor *émigrée*," she had said to Madam Glanvil, "and must disuse herself from such pomps. To Claire she said that nothing was so intolerable as that etiquette of the province, or "the great airs of the little noblesse." And she would never go to Court again.

Nor was Madame altogether charitable to Amice. She pronounced her a little wild—Madame "liked wild creatures in the forest; they had a fine free grace of their own—but in the *salon* one never knew what they would do next. In a word, the whole household was Insular. I am afraid," to Claire, Madame said, with a little compassionate shrug, "in fact, *English*."

Madam Glanvil, on the other hand, whose classifications were rather generic than specific, at once set down Madame la Marquise as frivolous and given up to vanities, M. l'Abbé as an ancient dandy, and Claire as a butterfly, and all three as, "in short, *French*." The only person of sense and character among them, she considered, was Léontine, but then Léontine was a Protestant, and made bargains, and did her work, and came to church like any other Christian, "so that she was scarcely to be called a Frenchwoman." I tried often to bring my two groups of friends together, but in vain.

The inevitable result of contact was efferves-

cence. Pressed closer, it would have been explosion, at least, on Madam Glanvil's side. So I had to desist, and content myself with loving them all round.

Meantime, whatever else we learned or unlearned, the meaning of many words expanded wonderfully through our intercourse.

French and English ceased to be the simple, plain definitions they had been. It was evident to us there were so many kinds of French. And to Claire, at least, it soon became evident that there were many kinds of English.

Then that word "*bourgeois*," how many puzzles it made for me; and also how many it helped to explain, in endeavoring to translate it to myself or to Claire! How much of English and French social life and politics lay wrapped up in it! Had we absolutely no synonym for it?

I had heard Madam Glanvil use the expression "town's folks" with something of the same unflattering emphasis. But then, with her, that meant not merely the lack of a social distinction, but of country habits. She would have used it with little less depreciation for fashionable men about town than for unfashionable men and women in Abbot's Weir. It meant people who could not ride, or hunt, or tramp about ploughed fields: effeminate creatures who carried umbrellas, and could not brave a herd of cattle. It had indeed to do in some measure with trade. Certainly trade was not to be accepted except as a last resource,

and people who contrived to get rich by trade were to be set down.

But, there even, was no sharp impassable barrier between gentry and "town's folks." People of good family had (unfortunately, of course,) to live in towns, and to go into business. Claire's father, on the contrary, under the *ancien régime*, would have had formally to resign his sword, and his cachet of nobility, before he could demean himself by trade.

In England there was, indeed, an aristocracy prouder, perhaps, than in France; but prouder because less fenced in. Pride had to hold firm the barriers law had left open. Titles which in the third generation ceased entirely, and a nobility continually recruited from the bench, the manufactory, and the counting-house, were in a very different sense, sacred from the great old noblesse of France.

"*Middle classes*"—did that express the thought better? In some respects. But it also expressed the difference. Middle; that is, between the upper and lower. But where the upper ended and the lower began, who could say? Especially as neither upper, middle, nor lower, were stagnant waters resting at their own level, but all in a continual state of ebb and flow in and through each other; so that, with all due respect to the catechism, the "station to which God has called us" is by no means a fixed line, always perfectly easy to determine, in a society where nothing is stationary.

"Pleasant old barriers," Madame des Ormes thought, "when people were not always struggling upwards, but content with each other, themselves, and their station. There *were* "stations" in those days; and people had "leisure."

"Pleasant, picturesque old barriers," my father said, "except that, within them all the time was gathering the flood which swept all barriers away, and much soil, and much life, which no floods could restore."

Pleasant evenings they were, when Madame des Ormes and my father sat on each side of the great chimney in the Stone parlor. Madame always preferred the Stone parlor. She said to Claire, who told me, that the Oak parlor was like a state-chamber without the Court; and the great drawing-room like a mortuary chapel without the sanctuary, only entered once a year, and terribly *bourgeoise*. But the Stone parlor was like France, like the hall of an old chateau where they met after the chase. There were the sporting-dogs, and the great logs flaming and crackling, and cheerful talk, and going in and out, and a feeling of life.

My father spoke French easily, and understood it perfectly, a rare accomplishment for Abbot's Weir in those days; and to Madame his manners had a deferential courtesy which she said always reminded her of the Old Court.

Her dress I cannot so clearly recall; I suppose because it always seemed such a natural part of

herself. But her manner charmed me inexpressibly. There was such vivacity and such suavity in it; such grace and such freedom. And then her whole person seemed an organ of speech. She spoke not only with her voice; or with her eyes, like Amice; but with every graceful bend of her throat, and turn of her arms. And as to her hands, their movements were like music. They made her conversation as sweet and as varied as singing.

She was, however, not without serious anxiety about my father. She thought him, like her poor brother the abbé, too "*philosophe*;" and had not they proved in Paris to what that led? Many a fragment of their conversation used to drop into our minds, as I was playing with Claire or Piers by the window, or as we sat silent by the fire, and interested me more than anything we were doing.

They had many a debate over Arthur Young, the traveller, in the course of which all kinds of curious detail of old French manners and customs used to come out.

And those debates were sure never to spoil any one's temper. Many sparks were struck, but there were no explosions.

There was a common ground of tender pity for human creatures in general; and a sense that the world, and even the Church in every corner of it, even to that most unsearchable corner within ourselves, needs a great deal of setting right.

Mr. Young, she would admit, might draw but

too truly, gloomy pictures of famished men, driven in herds across the hills, unfed and unpaid, leaving their own fields untilled to render serfs' service to the seigneur.

"But, Mr. Danescombe—he should not have left out the other side—there are hard matters and hungry laborers in all societies. Or are you, perhaps, so fortunate as to have none? Are those parish apprentices you spoke of all exactly content, and well fed? Mr. Young should have come to Les Ormes; and you also, Mr. Danescombe. We would have entertained you with an hospitality not quite, I hope, unworthy of your own. You should have seen how the services our peasants had to render us in harvest or vintage or even on the roads, were made quite a fête to them. We killed our oxen and our fatlings, and spread tables for them on the terraces of the chateau; and we, the ladies of the Castle, waited on them ourselves, and the sons and daughters of the Castle danced with them afterwards on the greensward. It was Arcadian; the costume of the peasantry blending with the toilettes of the old Court (each, of course, keeping to their own), the prime hand-in-hand with the peasant. Our peasants, or plain of our preserving forests for the chase? They were never so happy as when they accompanied us in the chase, and I assure you many a fine brace of game found its way from the seigneur's pouch to the laborer's *pot au feu*. They were afraid to complain, perhaps you think? Quite the contrary.

I see here nothing of the free speech there was between our people and ourselves. The quick wit of our countrymen and countrywomen, moreover, I assure you, could give us as good as we gave."

(I had heard Amice say much the same of the negroes.)

"They say our noblesse did not care for the poor. Mr. Danescombe, never believe it. Did not our mother teach us to make petticoats and jackets for the old women? And did not we dress the young brides from our own wardrobes with our own hands? Did we not make dainties for our sick, and tend them by the sick beds? You should have seen our Christmas fêtes and distributions. The people adored us. So completely of the past as all that is, I may say it now without vanity. They said no garments wore, and no dainties tasted, like those which came from our hands. Ah, Mr. Danescombe, they make me forget the Sermon on the Mount, those false accusers. But in those days, believe me, there were little secrets of that kind between us and the good God, which the poor deluded people forget, perhaps He will not. You think we were an exceptional family? My mother was perhaps an exceptional woman. Her piety had been learned at Port Royal, and some of our friends did sometimes accuse it of being '*tant soit peu Janséniste.*' One of our estates was not far from Port Royal des Champs. As children, we were sometimes taken

to see the ruins. My mother could explain them : the church which they filled with corn for the poor, the gardens and fallen cells made sacred by their prayers, made doubly sacred by their charity ; and she would never leave those poor up-turned graves without praying in memory of the holy souls of those who had lain there. As a child, I never quite knew whether, because by some inexplicable mischance they had missed the way of salvation and needed our prayers, or because we needed theirs. It was difficult. They were so saintly, so heroic, and yet condemned by those who should have known. Ah ! Mr. Danescombe, sometimes a sad thought comes to me about our France. I wonder whether it can be possible, what our poor Léontine says, whether indeed we have driven away our heroes and saints, who could have rescued us ; and so have nothing left to our country but the martyrs, who can only die for us. These, you know, the good God, and the malicious foe, suffer not to fail in any age or communion. The tradition of those good men and women of Port Royal lingered long among the poor of the district. And we called our little daughter herself after one of them, Claire—from the friend of St. Francis, founder of the poor Claires—and Angélique after the Mère Angélique.”

“ It was a beautiful and tender tribute, Madam,” my father said. “ May Mademoiselle be worthy of both her patronesses.”

“ I do not say there were no evils that deserved

chastisement, and needed correction," she would say. "God knows there were many. Our Great Monarch had been too much like a god, for a mortal man, though a son of St. Louis, safely to endure. There are traditions of Versailles we would willingly blot out. But we were changing all that. *We!* Mr. Danescombe, the poor noblese whom your Whigs abuse, and whom our Jacobins have guillotined. Was it not we, alas! who commenced the revolution? Did not M. de Noailles (M. le Marquis) propose equal taxation, the purchase from our order of certain feudal rights, and the absolute abolition of others, such as the *corvées*, or any compulsory service without compensation? And Mirabeau, and M. de Lafayette, mistaken as some of us may have thought them, were these men of the *bourgeoisie* or of the *canaille*? We had true instincts. We felt the tide must turn, was turning, and that we must lead it. And did we not try? We, and even our king?"

"You did try nobly, madame," my father said, sorrowfully, "at last."

"Ah, I know; it was too late. The stream was a flood. The tide was a deluge. But how could we tell? What could we do? It was, indeed, too late."

"Ah! Madame," my father said very gently, "I am afraid all reforms are too late which wait until the tide turns. All reforms which save from revolution must not be with, but *against the*

stream. God grant we find this out in time. God grant England may not silence her heroes, and only be left her martyrs !”

But little Claire ! Madame des Ormes, charming and sweet as she was always, remained a foreigner, an exile, with all her sweet familiar grace, a little apart, on a height we never forget, and I am not sure that she did.

But Claire was our own from very early days, our very own, with a difference, a fascinating difference of nature, of tradition, of ideas, of tastes, which made her always as fresh and interesting as a new story.

If Amice lifted me outside our home, not without a shock, so as to see that in a new light, Claire lifted us outside Abbot's Weir, and even England, and that without any shock. She saw everything and every person through such a sunny medium, and made the world so delightfully larger.

For one thing she learned English, which her mother never attempted, and Léontine and M. l'Abbé never achieved further than as a means of commercial intercourse with the “barbarous people” who had, they confessed, received them “with no little kindness.” She learned it carefully, thoroughly, only to the end deliciously blending her own idioms with ours, and giving to our English a clear staccato definiteness and delicacy which *pointed* it, as often she *pointed* my work, with the last finish of her accurate fingers.

And she taught Piers and me, in return, her clear graceful French, enjoying our amusement with her mistakes, and never laughing at ours.

Claire was not exactly a child, according to our English ideas. She had no shyness, or awkwardness; she seemed to have been born with that gracious tact, and that ready *savoir faire* which made the wheels of every day's life run smoothly. Where we were self-conscious, possessed by self, she was self-possessed, possessing herself, and all her faculties.

It was her natural tendency to agree with people, and please them if possible; to find out their angles to avoid them; just as in our Teutonic natures there is often a natural tendency *not* to agree with people, and to find out their angles to rub against them. Hers was the graciousness of a true aristocracy, not instilled by maxim, but infused by the life of centuries. Stiffened into a maxim, it might have read, "*Yield; because it is our right to command.*" Through all the courtesy there was a touch of courtly dignity which made half its charm.

It was a sunny atmosphere that Claire lived in, a positive sunshine, like that of her own land of purple vintages and golden harvests; she actually saw things softened, illumined, with all possible lights brought out, and the shadows glowing with reflections of the light that dwelt within herself; while many of us see things at best through a grey, clear, defining, unillumining daylight, and pride our-

selves in consequence on our truthfulness ; as if sunshine were not as true as mere daylight. If Δ mice was like a Northern forest, full of glades and mysteries, Claire was like her own sunny land of vintage and harvests and valleys, that stand so thickly with corn that they laugh and sing.

To make every-day life as pleasant as we can to every one around us may not be the very highest aim, but it is a good golden background for the severer work of life to be relieved upon. And it was on that golden ground Claire's world was painted.

Brave she was by instinct and by chivalry of race, and ready to make her little person a shield against the world for those she loved or pitied, as she proved that memorable afternoon when she kissed me with the foolscap on.

But the joys of the fight were not at all comprehensible to her. Her delight was to make every one at peace with one another, and pleased with one another, and also with themselves.

When she came into your house, she always found out something pleasant in it you had scarcely noticed before. If your windows looked south, there was nothing so pleasant as a sunny aspect ; if due north, there was nothing like looking out from the cool shadow into the sunlight.

She taught us first to see how beautiful our quaint old town was, in its green hollow of the hills. She had especial delight in our wild flowers. The banks of the three ancient roads which wound

from it up the hills, worn deep by the rains and the tread of centuries, were, she said, each one a hanging garden of delights, from spring to winter. She and Piers and I used to go on endless expeditions laden with baskets, which in the spring were filled with masses of primroses, violets, or blue hyacinths. These, of course, we knew and loved of old; but Claire had a liberality in her love of flowers beyond ours. Everything came well to her; things we had called weeds and rubbish, she contrived to make lovely nosegays of; ragged robins, "twelve o'clocks," foxgloves, woodruffe, blue cornflowers. She made her mother's little apartment gay all the summer through; and when flowers failed, she brought in leaves. Leaves were her specialty, she said, bramble leaves above all. She said the flowers were her English china, better than all the old majolica and Sévres in the château, and the autumn leaves were her English bijouterie and bric-a-brac, richer than all the old bronzes, and ormolu, with their metallic crimsons, and bronze, and gold. And "in shape" she said "flowers were nothing to leaves." "The good God," she thought, "having left out the colors and perfumes, had all the more beauty to spare for the design."

How choice and fair she made that little room of her mother's!

In the corner was a little, low, narrow bed, like a couch; but Léontine had draped it with white muslin, always fresh, and contrived a coverlid out

of some antique brocade, so that it looked like a canopied throne.

Then there was a little table, with a mirror behind it, and upon it a few relics, such as a jewelled snuff-box, with a portrait of a grandmother, powdered and frizzed, and one or two toilet ornaments. And in the window a common deal table, draped with muslin and frills, and always set with those rich masses of flowers, or leaves, in common white earthenware dishes, but looking as natural and at home as if they were growing on their own green banks. In a corner, a little table like an altar with a crimson antependium, and a delicately-carved, pathetic ivory crucifix on it; and a richly-bound prayer-book. On the walls were four or five miniatures grouped, and one larger head, often tenderly garlanded, of the king, Louis XVI.

We had nutting and blackberrying expeditions, Piers and Claire, and Dick Fyford and I, Claire declaring that no fruit in the garden was equal to blackberries; and many an opportunity was afforded to Piers of risking his life by gathering nuts and berries from impossible places up precipices and over rivers.

Our old abbey buildings, also, were great bonds of union between us.

These, Claire said, were as much hers as ours, being built by the monks, who belonged to all Christendom, when there was one Christendom, long ago. And she made the old arches and tow-

ers live to us, by telling us of an abbey close to her father's chateau, where real living nuns had been cloistered, where the lamp was always burning night and day in the church before the altar, and a sister kneeling before it, until the Revolution had quenched the lamp, and scattered the sisters, and turned the convent into a factory, and the church into a granary.

I suppose Claire would not have been a great reformer of wrongs; although she certainly would not consciously have inflicted any. She would scarcely have pulled of her own will against the stream. Side by side with any one on whom that strain of energy devolved, she could lighten the strain inconceivably by delicately indicating how to avoid all avoidable collisions, by keeping rowers and steersmen awake to every counter-current and every possible favoring breeze; above all, by keeping alive in the hearts of the toiling crew, that generous candor, open to every palliation and every excuse for opponents, which is not a little hard to maintain when the stream against which they pull is the injustice and the selfishness of angry human beings.

As a sufferer of wrong, nothing could be sweeter than she. Her hardest epithet for those who had murdered her father, and driven them all houseless and destitute from their fair, bright country home, was "deluded." Or if any severer denunciations ever passed her lips, they were always levelled at an impersonal "*On*," which had

deluded every one. "Our poor, dear, deluded people," she would say, "they (*On*) persuaded them that they would find gold mines in our chateaux, that they would be Rentiers, and all their starving children live like princesses, without impoverishing us. I am sure they never meant to ruin us. How could they, with all mamma and papa had done for them all their lives, and grandmamma before? We loved them, these poor peasants and surely they had loved us. They had danced us on their shoulders, and sung us songs, and laughed with delight when I lisped in imitation. I was their own in a way much as my mother's. And all at once they (*on*) came from Paris, and told them a quantity of falsehoods about the cruelties of the noblesse; perhaps also some true things, but certainly not what we had done. And those poor peasants went mad. And one night Léontine came in the middle of the night, and drew me out of bed, and huddled on anything she could find, and took me by the little back door, where my mother was waiting, through the wood, up the hill, to a cabin, our woodman's hut. And there we looked down and saw the dear old chateau illuminated more brightly than for any of our fêtes, but for the last time; flames breaking out of every window, and those poor, mad people shouting and dancing round it, where they used to dance with us, or wait for alms. They did not steal our things. They burnt them, Léontine said. And all because of what some wicked nobles had done somewhere

else to other people. Was it not strange? Léontine said it was because of things farther off even than that. She said things more precious than ornolu and ebony had been thrown into the flames, in old times; men and women, men and women of God!—her forefathers, she meant,—the Hnguenots. She said it was God “avenging His elect” at last. But *we* did not burn the people, nor hurt them, nor any one that we could help. And it seems a very strange kind of justice that my father, who was good to every one, should suffer because some one else’s grandfather was cruel to people we never saw.”

Poor little Claire, “*solidarité*” was a word that did not exist in her French. And yet in other ways she understood well that nations are not mere conglomerations of independent atoms, but that there is a deep and terrible reality in the words “national life.”

Léontine had her own interpretation of events, to which she steadily adhered. She was the only one among them to whom the history of the Revolution did not seem an unintelligible chaos. “Generation after generation, Monsieur,” she said to my father, “our poor France has driven away her heroes, those who could and would have saved us. It was not only that they hunted the Protestants away. It was the *strongest* and *bravest* of all the Protestants they hunted away. The gentle, and timid, and helpless, and womanly remained. The *men*, the soldiers of the faith, the heroes, fled or es-

aped, to you, to Holland, to Prussia. *Our* strength and courage went to strengthen you, in Holland, England, and Prussia. And so when the flood came, there were none strong enough to stem it. Even the ladies and gentlemen of Port Royal, Catholics of the truest, spoke too much truth for France, and they were trodden down. Generation after generation our poor France has driven away her heroes, and silenced her prophets, and now she has none but her martyrs left. But those, Monsieur, believe me, of the best. All our great ladies and lords can suffer, cheerfully, nobly, piously, like apostles. There is blood in France as pure and noble as any in the world. But alas! it seems only to flow for the scaffold."





CHAPTER XI.

VERY soon after my first day with Amice Glanvil at Court, it was decreed that Pier's path and mine were to separate; that he was thenceforth to attend Mr. Rabbidge's boys' school, while I was to continue with Miss Felicity, with the understanding that three afternoons a week were to be spent with Miss Loveday learning embroidery, fine needlework, dress-making, and millinery in general, as far as Miss Loveday's tastes could instruct me.

It was a terrible day to me, that first morning when Piers and I had to go our different ways to school.

He had a longer walk than mine, and had to start first.

He was full of glee. The last remnants of childish attire had been laid aside. There was in those days at Abbot's Weir no intermediate boy's costume. Piers sallied forth, fully equipped in a miniature edition of my father's "coat, hosen, and hat."

His very shoes had a manly tramp in them, as he marched down the street. And I stood alone

watching at the old arched door, feeling terribly feeble, "female," and forlorn.

At the corner he had the grace to halt and turn and give me a protective masculine wave of the hand, before he disappeared, so glad and free in his sensible tight garments, made of things that would not tear, made so as to be convenient for climbing and racing, and everything I delighted in, and in general with a view to being as little obstructive as possible; while mine seemed expressly constructed with a view to being obstructions in the way of everything it was best worth while to do, and filling up all the leisure spaces of one's life with making and mending them.

He had good reason to be glad; and for him I was proud and glad too. I would not have had him go a day longer with me for all it cost me.

To him it was a beginning, and through him for me also. But to me it was an ending also: so many things that are beginnings to brothers are endings to sisters.

He was to go on and out in so many ways—out into the world of boys, and of men, out into the world of Greek and Latin, and all kinds of wisdom, ancient and modern—while I was to go no further than round and round Miss Felicity's history and mythology lessons, the geographical lists of countries, provinces, and capitals, and the first rules of arithmetic, my only progress being, out of "round hand," business-like and legible, into "small hand," angular, ladylike, and indefinite.

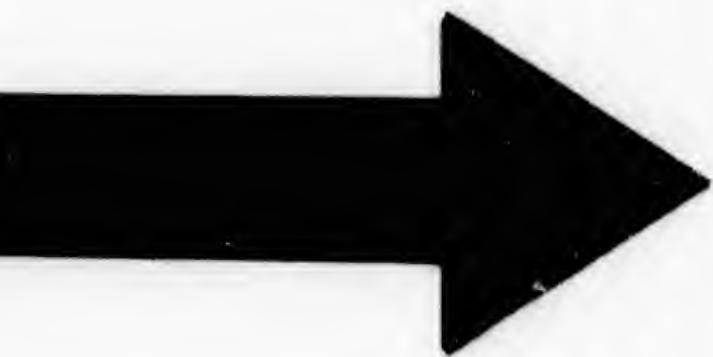
In my double relation to Piers I felt smitten. As his sister, I was never more to be his constant, hourly companion; as his "little mother" I could watch over him and protect him no more, except as a helpless hen-mother a brood of ducklings. He was launched into an element where I could not follow him; he must make his own way, meet his own temptations, encounter his own dangers, fight his own battles, while I could only cluck and flutter my wings on the shore.

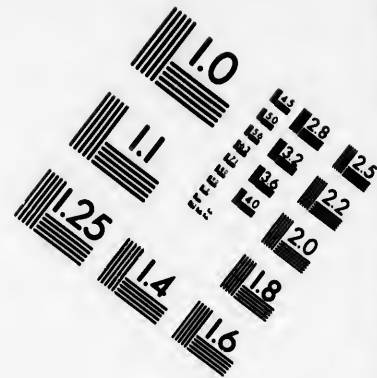
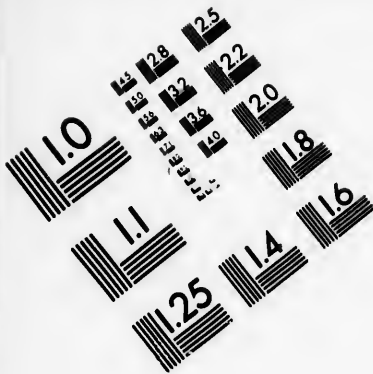
And he liked it, of course; he delighted in it, felt a generous trust that I delighted in for his sake, and had no idea, should never have any idea, I determined, that when he was quite out of sight, I went into the Stone parlor and seizing the kitten, rushed up with her to the inmost recess of the old nursery, which was now my bed-room, and seating myself on the little cot that had been his, where I used to say my prayers beside him, and had felt like his little mother, cried bitterly, and sobbingly told pussy that now I had no one to take care of but her, "no one in the world!"

The old church bell striking the school-hour broke in on my lamentations. I symbolically anointed my head, and literally washed my face, crossed the market-place, and got into the school before the chimes had finished; so that no one, I flattered myself, would see I thought it anything but a step onward in life, to have a brother at Mr. Rabbidge's.

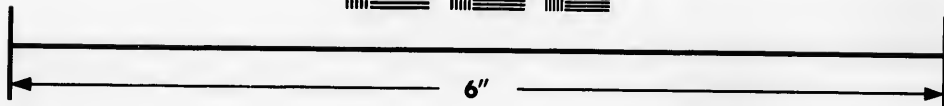
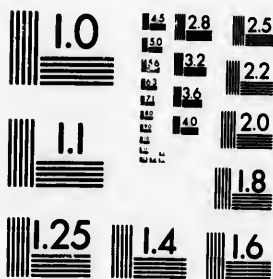
But all the morning the tears kept very near







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the brim, and I felt Amice Glanvil's searching wistful eyes on me.

At the end of the morning school, when we were left alone, as we often were, while she took the dainty little repast prepared for her dinner, she came up to me and grasped both my hands with one of her abrupt passionate movements.

"Bride, I cannot be sorry for you," she said; "I have tried. But it is of no use. Next to being a man oneself, there can be nothing better than to see one's brother beginning to be on the way to be a man. Think of what they can do! Think what he is going to learn to be, he and Dick Fyford, and all of them. They are gone to learn to be soldiers, to fight for England, and sailors to man great ships for England; and doctors to cure people's diseases, and lawyers to set people's wrongs right. (For that is what I think lawyers are for, though Granny says they are only to puzzle right and wrong together so cleverly, that no one can find the way through without paying toll to them.) And masters, to employ men; or writers of books, to teach men. How can you be anything for a moment but glad that Piers is beginning?"

For she knew quite well I was not very glad.

"I shall be very glad to-morrow, Amice," I said.

"Then be glad to-day," she replied. "I have no patience with people who keep turning their faces the wrong way, and sighing and crying because we must leave things behind. Of course, we

are always leaving things behind. Look the other way, and see what is before you, Bride Danescombe."

"I do not mind leaving things behind, Amice," I said, thinking her a little hard.

"Then *don't* be left behind," she replied, with her rare little laugh. "Go on! I mean to go on, although I am only a girl. But then, of course, I have no brother, so I have to do for both. But if I had a brother—a brave little brother like Piers, wouldn't we set some things right, together!"

"But I cannot go on, Amice," I said. "You know I have come to an end of Miss Felicity's lessons. And there is nothing to do but to go round again, and to sit still and sew."

"Sitting still and sewing *is* dull," she said, emphatically. "Happily for me, Chloe does all that, and there are plenty more." Then, suddenly, her face flushed as with a new thought, and she added, "Do you know, Bride, I think I will ask Granny to let me learn sewing with you. One never knows what one may have to do. And in learning of Miss Loveday one learns so many things more than she knows she is teaching."

That was a bright prospect for me—afternoons with Amice and Miss Loveday; and I left the room greatly cheered.

But in the afternoon little Claire had made some excuse of a message to our house, and we crossed the market-place back to Miss Felicity's together.

She said nothing ; but as she put her dear little hands in mine, I knew well what she meant. She wanted me to feel I had some one to take care of still. And in the evening, between Amice's bravery and Claire's soothing, I felt almost as bright as Piers himself when he swung into the passage, and his joyous voice rang through the house, calling for me.

There was a button to sew on and a rent to mend in those clothes which I had envied as so imperishable. And there was a history, brief but vivid, of the encounter with a bully of a big boy, which had occasioned the damage.

Piers had begun his battle of life with wrestlings literal enough. He did not tell me the name of his adversary, nor could I gather quite clearly the issue of the encounter except what might be inferred from the explanatory statement that "he could not help it, he could not see any fellow, whatever his size, throw stones at old black Cato, and call him names, and not try to stop it, and if the big fellow were to try it again, he must do the same."

He had, moreover, a suspicious mark on his eyebrow, which, with all his anxiety to conceal it, and all my bathings, grew deeper in tint, so that Piers had to select retired places, lest my step-mother's vigilant eyes should detect that he had begun boy life so pugnaciously.

It was plain that there would be points enough at which my brother's life and mine would meet,

and that he would need his little mother at many extremes yet.

Apparently, the "big fellow" did try it again, for Piers came back a few days afterwards with a peculiar twinkle in his eyes, and with a scar on his cheek.

"*He* did not give it to me," was all he vouched in explanation, "it was only a corner of a stone I came against in falling. But he was under, and I don't think he will try it again."

"Other people's rights and our own duties?" I ventured to ask.

But Piers would explain no further.

"It was a mean thing, in his opinion, to brag of things out of school before girls."

The force of the contrasts was strong on him.

Dick Fyford, however, told me enough to show that Piers had won his spurs.

Claire and I were decidedly proud of Piers' black eye. It consoled us for being girls and being left behind, to find him so unmistakable a boy.

But all our small public opinion was by no means unanimous on the subject. My stepmother "must beg that for the future, if Piers could not keep out of quarrels, he would quarrel in a gentlemanly way, with gentlemanly boys, and not get his face disfigured in a manner which made it unfit for ladies to sit at meals with him; and, above all, not in his new coat. She wondered Mr. Danescombe did not take the matter more seriously.

But it was so difficult to persuade him to take anything about the children seriously."

My father merely said,—

"My dear, it is impossible not to envy a little the sanguine Quixotism of these young people. Piers," he added, "if your black eye would begin to set the whole world and all its wrongs right, it would be a very well-invested black eye; and no doubt you are of opinion it will. But remember you have only two eyes, and only one new coat, and for our sakes please take proportionate care of each."

Piers and my stepmother were both silenced, neither seeing clearly where the little sarcasm fitted best.

But Miss Loveday was profoundly serious on the subject.

"My dear Piers," she said, in her gentlest voice, falling, as usual with her in agitated moments, into the "plain," Quaker mode of speech, "Thee will never win the true battles in that way. The weapons of the true warfare are not fists."

"But boys have not any others, Miss Loveday," he said.

"It is written, 'Love your enemies,'" said Miss Loveday, with tears in her eyes. "Forgive them that hate you."

"But I have no enemies," replied Piers, "and as to forgiving people who hurt other people who are helpless, I cannot. I might have hated him if

we could not have fought it out; but now there is no need to think of it any more."

Miss Lovejoy shook her head.

"Pride can forgive an injury it has avenged," she said. "Besides, we are told what to do if we are smitten."

Piers made no reply; in the art of verbal self-defence he was not strong. Besides, Miss Loveday was a woman, and deaf; and to defend oneself against a woman in the vehement form argument is apt to appear to take with deaf people seemed to him, I believe, unchivalrous. But he said afterwards to me,—

"It says nowhere, Bride, that we are to do nothing but be patient if *other people* are smitten on the cheek. And if the Sermon on the Mount means that, it must be meant for men, not for boys. Grown men have the Assizes and the Parliament, and all that kind of thing to stop other people from doing wrong; but we have nothing except our fists. Besides, there is the Old Testament. David and all of them often had to fight."

"Claire and I don't think you at all wrong," I said, "nor, I think, does father."

But this did not console Piers. I think he was more ashamed of our admiration of Miss Loveday's remonstrance.

"It *is* hard to have such a fuss about nothing, only because I was so unlucky as to get hit where it could be seen. Boys are always getting hit, of course."

In Ulphilas' translation of the Scriptures for the Goths, we are told that the translator left out the Book of Kings, thinking his Goths too likely to draw such encouragement as Piers did from the warlike proceedings therein recorded.

But Piers had plunged into the primitive age of Lynch-law, and "vigilance committees," with which the world is always renewing its boyhood, for young human creatures and young nations.

Homer seemed to him an imperishable picture of life; only he could never make out how the Greeks could both scold and fight. The scolding, he thought, was the natural share of those who could not fight; and the talking, of those who could not work, or *make*.

Criticism he considered the natural province of women, or of men who have nothing to do. It was not till later that he learned how some talking is making, and some words are battling.

The streams of our lives seemed running very far apart. For as Piers' life went forth more and more into the din and tumult, mine withdrew more and more into the stillness and retirement.

So much farther apart are boyhood and girlhood, than womanhood and manhood, the parting and distribution necessary to the deeper meeting and uniting.

Even our amusements separated. Claire and I pursued our strawberry, and flower, and black-berry gatherings, and nuttings, our gardenings, and

rambles alone, while Piers and Dick Fyford were shouting over cricket and football.

It was chiefly in making and mending that our lives seemed still linked.

For ministries in the form of mending there was no lack of opportunity. And Piers, now promoted to a real carpenter's bench and perilous workman's tools, constructed many a basket and box, and even chair and table, for Claire and me.

Amice, he always continued to maintain, was "almost as good as a boy;" besides, she had the glory of three additional years; and with her (his self-banishment from Court having been tacitly annulled in consideration of Granville Sharpe's achievements) he had many a daring gallop, not to say steeplechase, over the downs and moorlands.

But it was always the flowers which Claire loved that he contrived to remember, and to pour out now and then in a careless, casual way from his pockets, when he returned from his expeditions, and to empower me, if I liked, to carry over the way.

Meantime, we sewed, and Loveday listened, like Joan of Arc, to her "voices," and talked to us. That longing for the liberation of the negro slaves which she had inherited from her Quaker ancestry, and which had been as a patriotic passion to her lonely life, could not but come out in those long quiet afternoons. At first she hesitated to speak of it before Amice. But one day, when she had broken off in some story of wrong, Amice rose, and coming

close to her, said in those low clear tones Loveday always heard so well,—

“Do not stop. You cannot tell me worse than I know. When I was a child, I heard the cries from the punishment house; I saw the spiked collars, and the scars. You cannot tell me worse than I fear. Tell me, if you can, anything to give me hope.”

And Loveday told us the story of the struggle, so that the far-off fields of Pennsylvania and New England, where John Woolman and Anthony Benazet toiled for emancipation until not one Quaker held a slave, grew to us a land of sacred romance.

Dear to us also was the story of the poor bruised and half-blinded slave, Jonathan Strong, left to starve by his master; how he was nursed, and fed, and tended, and clothed by Granville Sharpe and his brother the surgeon; and then how out of that movement of natural pity, obeyed, grew the whole noble immortal work of Granville Sharpe's life; how, alone, against the stream of lawyers and judges, and against the law itself embodied in an iniquitous decision, and confirmed by the opinion of Blackstone, he turned the stream, and brought round lawyers and judges, and at last the very law itself, constraining Lord Mansfield to demand the broad issue which he had so long evaded, and to pronounce the liberating words, that whenever a slave touches English soil he is free, thus virtually pronouncing slavery itself a wrong, and laying the axe at the root of the tree which

from that moment began unperceived to totter to its fall.

So we sat and sewed and listened afar off to the echoes of many warfares, until under Miss Loveday's influence, sewing itself became ennobled to me, and seemed an essential part of the warfare.

"For in all wars," she said, "the battles are but the crises of the campaign, the tests of strength long-trained and long-tried. People are victorious by virtue of what they were before the battle. It is not only the men who wield the weapons that fight, but the men who bring the meat and bread, the men who till and plough, and sow the corn and herd the cattle, and," she added, with a growing intensity in her voice, "the women who bake, and milk, and churn, and sew, and bind up the wounds."

Men's work: tilling, herding, ploughing, and fighting.

Women's work: cooking, sewing, and nursing; that is, making raw material of all kinds, material, mental and moral, corn, axioms, principles, into bread for daily use and lint to bind up actual wounds.

Claire and I grew quite content with our feminine lot. But Amice said "some women had to take their share in the actual fighting, she believed."

"Queens," I conceded.

"All women have to be a kind of queens," she said, "when there are no men in the family. There is no Salic law which screens orphaned or

widowed women from taking their place on the throne, or their part in the battle."

And sometimes, she said to Miss Loveday, "It is the waiting that is so trying. If it were all real working, I would not mind a bit what the work was. It is the waiting and doing nothing for any one that eats into one's heart like rust."

"Waiting need not be doing nothing," Loveday said. "I have a good deal of it, and I have not found it so."

"Waiting may be waiting on God," she added very softly, "and I think there is little work as good as that."

And as we looked at her patient face, so pale and worn, and yet so often radiant from within, we understood something of what she meant.



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CHAPTER XII.

IT is characteristic of all truly upward paths that as we rise the little hills grow less, and the high hills higher.

Happy for us when the heights of our childhood are so truly high that they do not sink, but rise, with our rising, and only seem the more above us the nearer we approach them. It was always thus with Loveday Benbow, as through the years I grew to understand better what she was. She was in so many ways a centre to our little circle; partly by virtue of the very stillness and unchangeableness of her life amid our changing revolving conditions; by the simple fact of her being *always there*, and much more by the fact of her being always "*all there*."

Invalids have little idea how much the very stillness and monotony of their sick chambers (so hard often for them to comprehend or bear) tend to make them a sanctuary where others, stepping aside from the tumultuous world outside, are calmed, refreshed, and rested.

Loveday was our centre also, because she lived

so near the true Centre, which is the Sun, and therefore with her heart in the glow of that central sunlight, her mind looked freely all around, and saw things in their true relations and proportions, for us all; as we in the coil and tumult could seldom do.

She became the "eye" of our little landscape, as still waters do, by simply reflecting the light.

Against the stream, as many of her convictions were, she never seemed contending so much as following; calmly floating, or rather sailing on, because her inmost spirit had found the "rushing mighty wind" which "breathes upon the slain, and they live;" the Spirit which broods on the face of the waters, and they are full of the living. She was borne on, calmly, by the breath mightier than all the torrents of the world.

With her the deepest things in us all were opened, to ourselves and to her.

If Amice had lifted me first to a point of view outside my home, and Claire to one outside our England, Loveday Benbow lifted us all to a point of view from which we felt there was an outside, a glorious "expansion" a starry "firmament" beyond our whole visible world.

Piers was her prime favorite. She loved him almost as much as I did, and more than she did me, which was saying much.

His school life was not an eventful one. After that first conflict, he was seldom in the wars, or at least we did not hear of it.

The joys of battle were dear in themselves to Dick Fyford. But helping, not fighting, was what Piers delighted in; although, if the fighting came in course of the helping, he took to it heartily enough. The energy which in Dick was apt to turn to destructiveness, in Piers went to construction.

He had as much boyish delight in making a ship or a shed, or a model water-wheel, and making them well, as Dick had in maiming his uncle's trees and his own limbs by reckless climbing.

I cannot say that in "book-learning" as taught by Mr. Rabbidge, he excelled.

He looked at that time on the writers of books, rather as mere talkers on an extended scale.

And talking as I have said, he regarded as the especial province of woman; or of people in general who could not or would not work. Thus, on all professions of which speech was the medium, he looked not without contempt.

Two careers in life commended themselves to him. He wished to be a manufacturer or a doctor.

Doctors and manufacturers, he said, knew what they were about. To cure men, and to make things, was plain honest work. That is, the ideal of those callings was clear to him. They were something like keeping a garden, and tilling it, or keeping down the thorns and thistles of the wilderness.

To be a doctor he thought the best. The delight in watching the ways of birds and beasts,

which was natural to him, inclined him to natural history, and the skill and accuracy with which he handled things, might avail him in surgery.

What his conversations with Loveday were about, I often did not know. She used to say the boy's spirit dwelt among the "realities," among "the things that *are*, justice, goodness, and truth," unconsciously quoting Plato. She greatly longed for him to become a physician. There was a passage in George Fox's journal to which she especially delighted to refer. "The physicians," George Fox wrote (lamenting over the declension of all the professions from their true ideal), "were out of the wisdom of God, by which the creatures were made, and so knew not their virtues. But they might be brought back into the true wisdom of God, the Word of Wisdom by which all things are." And to this end she believed Piers, with his honest heart, clear judgment, his delight to "hear and to ask questions" of every one and everything, his determination to see and know things as they are, might greatly help.

I suppose his early revulsion from literature was owing partly to Mr. Rabbidge's mode of instruction. With Mr. Rabbidge literature was strictly "letters," in the literal sense; the instrument was everything. Even the great old Greek dramas and histories were to him rather herbariums of classical expressions than living fields of thought and beauty. The climax of attainment set before Piers was not to understand Æschylus or Herodo-

tus and through them Greek life and thought, but to write Greek verses, in which what was said was quite immaterial if only it was classically said.

It took years of living to counteract the effect of those years of learning, and to bring him back through the realities of the present to the glorious realities of the past.

Also it was natural to him not to take the same turn as our brother Francis; and Francis took at once to literature in Mr. Rabbidge's sense of it. "Words for the sake of words" did not at all repel him. To be an "elegant scholar" seemed to him, and to Mr. and Mrs. Danescombe, a lofty ambition.

Francis became Mr. Rabbidge's favorite scholar. His memory was accurate, and his taste in a certain cold and superficial way correct; and the glory of prizes of the "first place" and of public recitations was exactly the kind of glory he appreciated and his mother delighted in.

Very early she began to suggest that it would be a loss to the reputation of the town if Francis were not sent to the university; while at the same time a year or two more or less of school could make no difference to Piers, whose tastes were not in any way opposed to commerce. My vanity and ambition were often aroused on behalf of Piers. But Piers was not to be thus roused. He had ambitions; but not on that level.

That Amice Glanvil and I should be at home with Loveday, and even Piers, and open our inmost world to her was natural and obvious enough, she

being the dovelike winged creature that Amice Platonically said she was, and we sorely in want of such brooding warmth.

Amice having free range of her paternal library at Court, had been greatly delighted on behalf of Loveday when she made a discovery in an old translation of Plato of his theory of "wings secretly growing in the soul here preparatory to her free expanded life hereafter."

Loveday's spiritual wings were, Amice felt sure, already fully developed; wings that could make a nest anywhere—on any rock, for her nestlings, and could also soar far beyond our ken. It was only natural, therefore, that we motherless creatures should nestle beneath them.

But with Dick Fyford, the most militant and un-Quakerlike among us, it was the same.

From very early days he was always either falling into desperate quarrels, or in desperate love, not unfrequently both together. And in all cases Miss Loveday was his chosen confidant.

"She always took things so seriously," he said, "and did not make fun of a fellow." And a serious tax on any one's sympathy it must have been to take Dick Fyford's loves and wars in earnest, so frequently were the "scoundrelly dogs" of his limited but strong vocabulary, yesterday, "Not at all bad fellows after all," to-day; and the hard-heartedness and cruelty he should never get over to-day, in a few weeks obliterated by the unequalled fascinations of the next heroine.

It was certainly a relief to Loveday when Dick went to sea, although she had many scruples about seeming to sanction it.

"Making climbing at the risk of the neck a matter of duty," she pleaded, "does seem the only way of saving some lads from breaking their necks as a matter of choice. And a sailor need not absolutely be a man of war, although in these days it does seem too probable he will."

It was so also with Madame des Ormes. Nothing soothed her so much as to sit by the little couch where Loveday had to spend so much of her life, in the plain unadorned room, where the only lustrous thing was the old oaken floor, polished with the rubbing of generations. She said it made her think of Thomas a Kempis, and made luxury seem a folly and a vulgarity.

The contrast of the stately gracious lady with her animated face and movements, and our dear dove-colored Loveday with her still soft face and voice, often charmed me.

With most of us, Madame was, on religious questions, a foreigner. There were mutual suspicions, mutual reserves, mutual antagonisms concealed or confessed, mutual ignorance of the real basis of one another's daily life. Even with my father, the sympathy did not reach beyond "questions of the Second Table." She recognized him fully as her "neighbor," and loved him as a lover of mankind, but as to his ecclesiastical position she was not without disquiet.

With Loveday Benbow she was at home. To her she opened the inmost sanctuary of her constant heart. To her she spoke as to none beside of her husband; cut down by the mob of Paris, at the door of the prison of the village at the terrible sentence "A La Force," the terrible revolutionary formula corresponding to the masked sentence of an earlier inquisition, "To the Secular Arm."

"They dared not cry to all those innocent victims," she said, "'A la mort.' So terrible has God made crime to conscience, my friend, that the worst of us dare not utter the worst they can do."

They sat together under the great shadow of death, but they found it the shadow of the great Threshold. One day the gate would open, they knew, and let them in.

To their victorious Christian faith in the unity of the Church, that barrier, so terribly real to most of us, which separates the Church visible on earth from that invisible in heaven, had become a mere "veil," transparent, at least translucent often here.

The Church for them was divided not into Roman and Anglican, Catholic and Protestant, but into the wrestlers and the victors, the combatants and the crowned, the faint and few, struggling still through the waves of this troublesome world, and the glorious multitude innumerable, welcomed and welcoming on the other shore.

Yet Loveday Benbow was in the whole type of her piety a Quaker.

She had indeed been baptized in infancy, with

Miss Felicity as one of her sponsors. And whatever had been her convictions, her health would have prevented her attending the public services of the church. Moreover, the sacrament was not administered in Abbot's Weir more than four times a year, and the office for the communion of the sick was regarded chiefly as a mild mode of announcing the medical sentence of death.

Had her belief as to the sacrament been that of the nuns of Port Royal, she must have been practically reduced by circumstances, as many of the nuns of Port Royal were by persecution, after their dispersion, to "spiritual communion."

Yet the mutual attraction between her and Madame des Ormes was not an isolated instance of union of heart between Roman Catholics and Quakers, nor do I think the attraction was merely one of personal character.

The Holy of Holies in all forms of Christianity is surely the same. For Friends the outer sanctuaries and courts do not exist; for the most spiritual saints in all communions they only exist outside. The very multitude of dogmas and complication of rites in the Roman Church has, in many instances, driven her saints inward to find their rest in the bare simplicity of some great first principle.

For Brother Lawrence, as for John Woolman, alike, the true dwelling-place and "covering" of the spirit is in "awful retiredness inward in the presence of God."

Also, both Loveday and the Marquise were sufferers. To both the whole world lay under the shadow and the shelter of the Cross of Redemption.

By both it was never forgotten that the only perfect life ever lived on earth had ended visibly there; and with both it was the deepest conviction of the heart that this apparent end was not an end, but a beginning, and meant not defeat but victory.

On both, moreover, had been laid a life-long burden, which could never more be laid aside, the burden of irreparable bereavement, and of irreparable pain. To both, therefore, life had made it plain that the Master's Cross was not only to rescue from suffering, but to empower to suffer; not to abolish the Cross for the disciple, but to consecrate the yoke into the Cross, by the simple act of willingly taking up the involuntary burden daily after Him. Thus, neither Madame des Ornes nor Loveday Benbow were in the danger which besets the prosperous "religious world" of making their ideal of religious service a beneficent dispensing of alms from the throne, instead of, like the Master's, a sympathetic bearing of the yoke with the suffering.

"Quærens me sedisti lassus,"

for the pattern of life was as present to them as

"Redemisti crucem passus,"

for its motive power.

I have always been glad that my first acquaintance with holy people was among those who dwelt in the shadow, rather than among those who dwelt in the sunshine.

It made it clearer whence the inward sunshine came. It made me see a little into the depths of Christian life before learning more of its expansions.

Yet there was a difference as well as a resemblance between Loveday and the Marquise. It arose, I think, partly from their types of faith, but also partly from their differences of character and experience.

The element of hope was far stronger in Loveday Benbow,—not the imperishable hope of the immortal life, this was equally strong in both,—but hope for this struggling, sinning, suffering world,—hope for humanity.

In representing the life of the two symbolically, I would picture Madame des Ormes kneeling with clasped hands and upturned weeping face at the foot of the Cross—the Crucified still fixed there; but Loveday should stand by the empty sepulchre, her hands outstretched to clasp the feet that were to “go before into Galilee,” and on her lips and on her radiant face the rapturous “Rabboni.”

The words that seem to vibrate on the ear of one are, “*My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?*” on the other falls the inspiring message, “*Go tell my brethren that I am risen and go before you.*”

But the thing about Loveday Benbow that was

characteristically "Quaker" was the *listening* attitude of her whole being.

Of all the titles given to the early Church before she received her Christian name at Antioch—"brethren, saints, believers, disciples"—the one most applicable to Loveday would have been that of "disciple."

You felt always that she was a "learner," only a teacher because always learning. With her no pupil came to drink of a stagnant water.

The well of living water did indeed spring up in her heart continually—the Dropping Well from the Rock; and she listened to its musical flow, and drank of it, and drew from it always fresh for every fresh pitcher presented to her, every thirsty heart that came to her.

When you came to her for counsel, she did not supply you in a moment with some ready-made maxim. She herself had to consult her authority, was no library of old parchments, no mere record of decisions on other cases. It was a voice, a living voice, with a fresh decision for every case. There was indeed a Book more precious to her than gold and sweeter than honey; but to her that Book was the utterance of One who lives, and speaks, and inspires still.

The Revelation of God through the History of One People, and above all of One Life, was, she believed inspired into the hearts of all people to be the food of every life by a Spirit who communes forever personally with the spirits of men, who

teaches, reminds, pleads, enkindles, rebukes, exhorts, comforts,—does all that is involved in the manifold word Paraclete.

In this great Catholic truth, brought forward and pressed on the consciousness of the Church, as so many truths have been, by one section of it, often in disproportion, and with that one-sided intensity which seems the condition of the progress of truth among us (who having a mountain to climb, have to climb it for the most part by a road engineered in zig-zags), Loveday had been nurtured by her Quaker mother.

When first I remember her she must have been still young, scarcely twenty. To us she never seemed either young or old. In the external sense youth, with its vigor and eager impulse, was never hers. In its deepest sense youth was here, with all its freshness and glow of hope always. Scarcely twenty, yet her life as to personal incident and action was already finished.

Mother's love for her had early passed into the heavens; father's love—protective, self-denying, provident, generous — she had never known. From earliest childhood she had seen her mother pining, fading, dying under her father's neglect and extravagance. The very love which made her quick to see and wise to soften her mother's sufferings, rendered her keen to see and quick to hate her father's selfishness.

Terrible are the lives thus poisoned at the fountain, for which the instinctive affections which

are at the root of all love, are at war with the moral principles which are at the root of all right; for which the alternative lies between "calling evil good," and not being able in the inmost heart to "give honor where honor is most due."

Terrible when the great sacred parable of human relationships is reversed and falsified, when the stone is given to the children for bread, and the poisonous serpent laid in the child's bosom by the very hand that should have guarded from it. In such a chaos there is no resource but one, to look up from the broken mirror to the unbroken light it should have reflected, from the love which has failed to the eternal love, which is fatherly and motherly at once, and never fails.

And this Loveday Benbow did.

The solitude in which her mother's death left her was, for heart, and mind, and spirit, for all that makes "me," as absolute as that of Moses on Sinai. Below was Miss Felicity worshipping her idol, which she had robbed herself of gold, and jewels, or such equivalents as she possessed, and every precious thing, to make what it was; happy once more to be sole priestess at its shrine.

To little Loveday it was no shrine. The utmost which her patient and injured mother had been able in dying to leave her was a legacy of reverent pity, reverence for the unfulfilled relationship, pity for the lost man.

And in this solitude came to her the voice of God. Direct, through no mediating mortal lips,

but immediate from spirit to spirit, piercing through all the weeping and the wailing of the people, that voice had reached her; and direct, by no tender human links, except the humanity of God made man, by no gentle steps of love ascending softly from higher to highest, her spirit darted with an arrow's flight to Him. She felt Him always nearest, His voice the clearest to hear, the easiest to understand, the dearest to follow, His love not only the sublime crown and climax of all, but the most familiar and homelike of all; what He cared for, her closest care; what He hated, her most natural indignation.

For to her the voice of God was no mere inarticulate music, but a living voice whose "*Woe unto you*" was as real and as needed as its "*Come unto me*"—"Woe unto you" to the oppressor under any disguise,—"*Come unto Me*" for the weary and heavy laden of every color.

Well for her that her love for God was so true, that like all true love it brought its burden as well as its joy. She did not perplex herself with theories about anthropomorphism. She believed in the possibility of the Incarnation with all its attendant possibilities, and in the fact of the Incarnation with all its results.

That God should be "*grieved at His heart*" to her meant, at all events, something quite real, something at which those who loved Him must be grieved at heart too.

That God should be afflicted with the afflictions

of Israel of old meant not that He had been roused from the calm of the serene upper heavens to a transitory exceptional pity, but that He pitied all the creatures He had made, and was afflicted with their afflictions always.

And the wronged people of the time, her mother had taught her, were the "black mankind" whom the English people in the West Indies and in America stole, and bought, and sold, and held in cruel bondage, whom the Quaker Society, alone of all sections of the Christian Church, had voluntarily emancipated and refused to hold in bondage, and were laboring to set free throughout the world.

There was something surely in the "listening," the stillness, the "waiting," on which fell clear as a church bell when the whole church was asleep and heard nothing, the conviction that to buy, and sell, and hold in bondage "black mankind" was a sin.

During her long nights of weariness and days of pain her spirit, that is she herself, had suffered with the suffering people. She had identified herself with them as Kosciusko with his Poland, or Hofer with his Tyrol, or the most loyal Vendean with the fallen race of St. Louis. She had made that wronged people her people, as truly as she believed her God their God.

Not with a blind enthusiasm. She loved too much to idealize. She longed to help too much to suffer herself to be deceived as to what help was needed. That the degradation was also moral

that the chains bound round them were also chains of sin, only made her pity more intense.

Taking them at their worst, stupid, childish, helpless, brutalized, idle, vulgar, as their hardest enemies could picture them, at their worst, and because of the worst oppression had made them, her heart glowed towards them with indignant pity and agonizing love.

To me, through her inspiration, that great anti-slavery conflict became like one of Homer's battles, or the story of the Peninsular War, or of Waterloo, as I have heard them from those who fought there. Pennsylvania and New England, where John Woolman went on his weary foot-pilgrimages of compassion to rouse the "Society" to the wrongs of the slaves, were to me romantic and sacred names. Those quaint old volumes of Quaker literature which she loved to read, with their old-fashioned printing and their more old-fashioned wording and thinking, conscientiously, or unconsciously, plain to the utmost limit of plainness, as to the picturesque and the æsthetic, even now make my heart throb like some new message from a dear voice of the many now out of sight and hearing to me. As Amice Glanvil used to say, "if the slaves had been white, or olive, or any artistic color, and instead of woolly hair had rejoiced in raven tresses" or "radiant masses of gold," the world would have awakened up earlier to their wrongs. But Loveday took them at the worst, thick-lipped, woolly-haired, ungraceful, and loved them better for their very

ugliness, as a mother her ugly child. In her heart, Amice declared, Loveday called them not *black*, but *bronze*, a kind of duller gold.

Too often, indeed, the picturesque of things seen and temporal may blind us to the true poetic of the things unseen and eternal.

The whole history of that great wrong was vivid and distinct to Loveday as her own.

"How nearly," she used to say, "the monstrous evil of modern slavery had, at the very beginning, been crushed in the germ; how irresistibly and swiftly, once allowed to live, it had grown!"

For centuries the Christian Church had protested against slavery, had fought against it. For two centuries she had vanquished it, and driven it from every realm where she had sway. First of the nations, Ireland, on this point twice in this long campaign, wisest of all by virtue of the wisdom of the warm heart, had renounced this wrong. In 1172 her clergy forbid all traffic in human beings, and accomplished the emancipation of those who had been sold into bondage, chiefly English men and women, kidnapped and shipped from Bristol.

In France the burden of wrong had rested on the heart of her king, and in 1315, Louis X. enfranchised all crown serfs, declaring that "slavery was contrary to nature, which intended that all men should be by birth free and equal."

And so for two centuries the cry of the bondsman had ceased to go up to heaven from Christen-

dom, at least for any of the children of the Church.

That victory might have seemed won for ever. But, alas! the banner under which it was won was too narrow. And, moreover, the religious wars of the Cross checked the progress of emancipation. It was held unlawful for any Christian to enslave his brethren; but the followers of Mohammed were not "brethren," they were aliens, enemies of God and man, and accordingly numbers of Saracens were sold into bondage without remorse. For broad as the field of Christendom is, humanity is broader. The Church had nobly thrown her shield over all her children down to the meanest. She had freed all Christendom from slavery. She had yet to learn that the pity and the justice of God reach further than the most Catholic Church that has learned to believe in them, and that creation is an earlier claim on His love than baptism.

In this mediæval limitation of emancipation, noble as mediæval Christian emancipation was, lay the little rift which was again to spoil all its music.

Through this one weak place came in, slowly at first, and then in overwhelming force, the whole monstrous iniquity of modern slavery, worse than ancient, by all the Christian pity it had to stifle, by the "little grain of conscience" which "made it sorr."

The Spanish conquest of Mexico and Peru caused the desolation of two countries. The native

races of America were crushed beneath the weight of forced labor, and the native races of Africa were torn from their homes to supply their places. Not without individual protest. Again and again the merciful heart, always beating in the Church, beneath all slumber, and all disguises, rose against this great wickedness.

Cardinal Ximenes refused (even at the instance of Las Casas, in his mistaken hope of saving the Indians) to sanction the African slave-trade.

Charles V. abolished slavery throughout his dominions. The Dominicans condemned it, in contradiction to the Franciscans, and Leo X., when the contending orders brought the question before him, gave decision on the broadest issues. "Not the Christian religion only," he said, "but Nature herself protested against a state of slavery."

On two other sovereigns this great wrong weighed heavily—Louis XIII. of France, and Elizabeth of England.

The conscience of Christendom on the heights, above the temptation, was clear. But great torrents of wrong are not stemmed by voices from the heights, but by humble men on the levels, pulling against the stream, or laboriously building dykes of common earth, to turn its course.

If kings are to serve a kingdom, it can only be by coming down to serve. And Elizabeth and Louis XIII. did not come down and serve; they stood on the heights and protested. And the thing

against which they protested paused for a moment and then went on.

Self-interest proved stronger than monarchs and Popes. Slavery rooted itself North and South through all the continent of America.

Louis was "uneasy" at having to sign an edict consigning all Africans who came to his colonies to slavery.

Elizabeth had a "religious scruple;" and sending for Sir John Hawkins, the founder of the English slave-trade, expressed her horror at Africans being taken from their country "without their free consent."

To Louis XIII., for the first time probably, the religious argument was used. It was suggested that slavery would be an effective means of propagating the Gospel among those benighted Africans. And the edict was signed.

To Queen Elizabeth Sir John Hawkins promised obedience; a promise which he kept by kidnapping as many natives as he could from the African coast on his next voyage.

Something stronger than "religious scruples" and "uncasiness" is needed to combat such evils.

The Puritan forefathers of Massachusetts also protested.

In the first instance, fresh from English political freedom, and their own struggles for religious liberty, they did more than protest. They threw two masters of slave ships into prison, and threatened all future kidnapers with death.

In Rhode Island (1527) Roger Williams, the founder, declared all negro servants free after ten years of service.

Yet self-interest and love of money prevailed. The evil crept on. By the middle of the seventeenth century every State south of Rhode Island was slave-holding; and even the Quakers of Pennsylvania were involved both in the traffic and the property.

The mediæval day of emancipation was dying fast, and thick night was coming once more over the nations. The last voices of the nightfall have their especial interest as well as the first voices of the dawn.

Of these Baxter and George Fox are among the last solitary protests.

The last cry of warning from any body of men comes in 1688 from a little community of German Quakers, driven from Kreishiem in the Palatinate to Pennsylvania. Coming, as they believed, to a land of light and freedom, they break into a cry of indignant astonishment at finding "black brethren" held in bondage there by Friends.

"Ah, do consider well this thing," they wrote to the Monthly Meeting at Philadelphia, "you who do it, if you would be done unto in this manner. And if it is done according to Christianity, pray what thing in the world can be done worse unto us, than if men should rob or steal us away, and sell us for slaves in to strange countries, especially husbands

from their wives and children? *If this is done well, what shall we say is done ill?*"

Clear and strong, the protest of these humble, single-hearted men rings out through the growing darkness; and then falls the silence of night. The chains of darkness are riveted on America north and south, on the bodies of black mankind, and on the souls of the white.

Yet even through the night the silence is not unbroken. There are voices mild and slumbrous as of those who mutter in sleep, or isolated and piercing as of the watchers who dwell in the presence of Him who neither slumbereth nor sleepeth.

In 1727, a London Quarterly Quaker meeting, "uneasy," like Louis XIII., resolved, that the importing of negroes from their native country by Friends is "not a commendable nor allowed practice," and is therefore censured. And in America similar mild rebukes were repeated from time to time. But however uneasy the censure may have made those it concerned, the uncommendable practice went on.

Until at last began what Loveday used to call the first voices of the dawn, the morning spread upon the mountains, which she was persuaded should never again die into darkness.

Solitary, scattered, too far apart, and too feeble to be echoes of each other; each separate voice called forth in response to the Voice of the Shepherd; each separate witness, concerned not to "de-

liver his own soul," but to deliver the oppressed whose burden lay upon him.

At last in a few human hearts a love to God and man had sprung up as determined and active as the love of gain in the oppressors.

Self-love had encountered a love of man as real as itself, and when real always stronger, as God is stronger than the world.

In Long Island, William Burling, true to the last to the generous sympathies of his youth, "abhorring slavery from his early youth;" in Philadelphia, the merchant, sober Ralph Sandiford, refusing to accept pecuniary aid from any who held slaves; and Benjamin Lay, scarcely four feet high, with his long white beard, and stoical life, driven nearly to madness by the scenes he had witnessed among the negroes in Barbadoes.

And then, no longer solitary, but leading on a chorus which was swelling daily, Anthony Benezet and John Woolman.

It was good, Loveday thought, to observe that each of these to whom it was given first to wake at the Master's call, and to carry it on to others, and so to wake the Church, had been listening for His voice, were men who had already risen above the common idolatry of the age, who having refused to bow the knee to Mammon, had thus learned to say No to the prevailing sin around them, before they said Yes to this high especial call.

It was no sin, she said, to buy and sell in the

market-place, but it was not in the market-place that the heavenly voices sounded clearest.

Anthony Benezet, coming of a race trained for generations to endurance, son of a father exiled by the revocation of the edict of Nantz (one of the many heroes France had driven from her,) holding that the noblest service is rendered with the noblest part of us, that in God's kingdom the highest offices are those which serve men directly instead of paying others to serve, chose the career of a teacher in Philadelphia, rather than that of a merchant.

Of silver and gold having none, better gifts were given him; impotent hearts leaped at his word to action.

His tract on the history of Guinea furnished Clarkson with material for his *Essay on the Slave-trade*, and so gave the impulse to the English abolition movement.

His pupil, William Dillwyn, formed the link between the American abolitionists and the English.

But most of all, Loveday delighted in some manuscript fragments which she possessed from the journals of John Woolman, of New Jersey, a "Minister among Friends," who had died at York in 1772.

"From what I had heard and read," he wrote, "I believed there had been, in past ages, people who walked in uprightness before God, in a degree exceeding any that I knew or heard of now living. And the apprehension of there being less steadiness

and firmness among people of this age than in past ages often troubled me while I was a child."

There Loveday used to say was the little well-spring on the hills from which all the river flowed.

John Woolman had learnt that in the Church of God *there is no irrevocable Golden Age in the past.* The child in the new colony in the new continent of the far West was as near the source of "uprightness," of truth, theological and practical, as the children in the old country in the far East, on whom Divine hands were laid eighteen centuries ago; as the young man whose name was Paul, at whose feet the murderers of the first martyr laid their clothes, on whose dazzled eyes broke the light brighter than the Syrian sun, on whose ears fell the transforming "Why persecutest thou Me?"

The dragons are ever springing anew from the earth, and the heroes are ever needed to encounter them.

The Church is a living body, as her Lord is living, not a sculptured copy of more glorious sculpture of olden days.

The good Shepherd leads, the good Spirit inspires, now as of old.

Around John Woolman doubtless were countless religious men, admirers of prophets, apostles, and martyrs, and all the dragon-slayers of old, quietly tolerating the dragon of their own days, and even persuading themselves that he was a necessary beast of burden, without whom the soil by which they lived could not be tilled. To John Woolman,

"whose concern it was to attend, with singleness of heart, to the voice of the true Shepherd, and to be so supported as to remain unmoved at the faces of men," he appeared in his true form, as the destroyer of moral and spiritual life,—not to be tolerated for an instant, whether the fields could be tilled and the owners live without him or not.

To the sober New Englander the first encounter came in prosaic New England shape.

He was asked to write a will bequeathing black mankind as property.

"As writing was a profitable employ, and as offending sober people was disagreeable to my inclination, I was straitened in my mind, but as I looked to the Lord He inclined my heart to His testimony; and I told the man that I believed the practice of continuing slavery to this people was not right, and that I had a scruple in my mind against doing writings of that kind; that though many in our society kept them as slaves, still I was not easy to be concerned in it. I spoke to him in the fear of the Lord, and he made no reply to what I said, but went away; he also had some concerns in the practice, and I thought he was displeased with me.

"In this case I had a fresh confirmation, that acting contrary to present outward interest from a motive of Divine love, and in regard to truth and righteousness, opens the way to a treasure better than silver, and to a friendship exceeding the friendship of men."

He was not lifted above the level of his neigh-

bors. To him sober accumulation of silver would have been pleasant ; and to lose at once silver and approbation was not pleasant ; but truth and righteousness and the friendship of God were better, and he chose them.

The sacrifice required of him was not great, a few silver coins,—the sullen silence of a neighbor. But the principle would have led to any sacrifice. The faithfulness which enabled him to refuse the shillings would have strengthened him to choose the stake.

His testimony began in 1759.

The Hand whose slightest indication he followed led him on. His mind being “in awful retirement inward to the Lord,” the things which grieve the Merciful One became intolerable to him.

He could not bear in his journeys as a minister, to “eat, drink, and lodge free cost” with those who lived in ease on the hard labor of their slaves ; he could not bear to ride at ease, while the oppressed were toiling, “hardly used,” for those who welcomed him.

Often weakly, and with a weary body, he travelled on foot from place to place to bear his testimony.

“Though travelling thus on foot was wearisome to his body, it was agreeable to his state of mind,” while his spirit was “covered with sorrow and heaviness,” on account of “friends living in fatness on the labor of the poor oppressed negroes.”

Wearied with the way, like the Master, he seem-

ed thus nearer Him and nearer those on whom the burden was laid heavily.

In these lonely long walks and "in this state of humiliation, the sufferings of Christ and His tasting death for every man, and the travels and sufferings of the primitive Christians were livingly revived" in him.

His spirit grew freer under the yoke, and he "expatiated" at one of the quarterly meetings "on the tenderness and loving kindness of the Apostles, as shown in labors, perils, and sufferings towards the poor Gentiles," and contrasted with "this the treatment which those Gentiles the negroes received at their hands," and "the power of truth came over those present, and his mind was united to a tender-hearted people in those parts."

Many journeys he made from house to house, earnestly warning the slave-owner against his sin.

In 1772 he came on a religious visit to England, and laid before the quarterly meeting at York the wrongs of this oppressed people.

And then soon afterwards he died.

But in 1774 the Quakers of Pennsylvania and New Jersey disowned any of their members concerned in the slave-trade; and in 1776 they disowned any who refused to emancipate their slaves.

Twelve years afterwards not a slave was held by any member of the Society of Friends.

But these were dead. Who held the banner and carried on the fight now?

It was a way of Loveday's that she never spoke of "the dead."

Death, she taught us, was not a permanent condition, but a momentary transition, a commending of the spirit, not for the first time nor the last, into the hands of God.

"From the hand of God to the hand of God." They lived by the hand of God. They live in his protecting, moulding, perfecting hands forever.

"These all died in faith," she said, "not having obtained the promises: they embraced them in weakness and in darkness afar off. Do you think they will not embrace them now, when they are in the light, and in fulness of strength, when the fulfilment comes near, as it is coming every day?"

She could never endure a word which seemed to give the visible precedence over the invisible just made perfect.

"We shall not prevent (precede) them that are asleep," she would say. "They went before, and they shall be first."

"But Loveday," I said one day, "these have overcome, and the battle goes on; you say the great thing for us is to find out the dragons and the heroes now."

"Yes," she said. "It is because God is not the God of the dead, because the prophets are living now, that it is such empty work to build their sepulchres. They are not caring for their sepulchres, but for the issue of the battle in which they shared."

"But how shall we find out the heroes and the

dragons?" I asked, thinking that the Frenchmen who destroyed the Bastile, in whose cause (partly) I had worn the foolscap, had not exactly proved the right heroes, and hoping that Granville Sharpe would not similarly fail.

"By fighting your own little bit of the battle well under the Captain's eye; by pulling against the stream of little temptations," she said. "It was by refusing the ill-earned shillings John Woolman was made ready to embrace the emancipation of a race. In the intervals of the battle, if they are any, by keeping our armor bright, and listening for the Master's word of command, and being ready to obey it at all costs. Above all by *listening*. He can direct us *through any voice*, if we are awake and listening. John Woolman was guided into his right path by a temptation to forsake it; Granville Sharpe by an appeal to his kindness from a poor bruised and runaway slave, Jonathan Strong; Thomas Clarkson by an invitation to write a prize essay; William Wilberforce, by an appeal from Thomas Clarkson. But neither of them would have followed the call," said Loveday, "unless they had been listening for the Voice, and had cared before all things in the world to follow it."





CHAPTER XIII.

IT was New Year's Eve; the eve of the birthday of the new century.

It had been proposed that the most intimate members of our circle should welcome it in together in our house. But this fell to the ground.

Madame des Ormes could not trust herself to be in company on that evening. The old century had slain and buried too much. Its last day would to her but be a "jour des morts." She would keep the vigil alone; and her Claire would, she hoped, sleep it in, and see the new century first in the light of dawn. Her poor child's face ought to be towards the dawn; but scarcely her own.

Miss Felicity preferred being under the same roof with her poor brother, though to him years or centuries could bring but little change.

Loveday was not an observer of days and months, and times, and years. To her every morning brought its new mercies, and began a new life. She sat beside the river which makes glad the city of God; and the river of time flowed by her less

heeded. It came from the exhaustless clouds and flowed to the boundless seas, and was flowing always. There were breaks in it, rapids, and calms, but they were not affected by the commencement of what we call centuries. Days and nights were realities; and mankind had its days and nights, but they did not date from such artificial barriers. History and life did not, for her, divide themselves in that way.

So our New Year's gathering was reduced to our own family and my uncle Fyford. Dick was far away in the Mediterranean, blockading Malta, and defending indefensible Naples; his brief letters, when he wrote, full of nothing but Nelson.

Mrs. Danescombe had desired to have introduced the new century in state with the amber damask uncovered, in the drawing-room, but my father for once overruled her decision, and we met it gathered around the wood fire in the old Stone parlor.

"Yesterday," said my uncle, "the king will have closed the session; in three weeks the Irish members will be flocking to London, and we shall have the first United Imperial Parliament."

"Scarcely united, I am afraid," said my father. "The old Irish Parliament died hard."

"Everything in Ireland dies hard," retorted my uncle. "Dying and massacring is their strong point. Seventy thousand in the last rebellion, '98. If they could only live and let live, it would be another thing."

"Well," said my father, "in one good thing they are strong—they are against the slave-trade to a man."

"Poor creatures," said my uncle, "they never had any slaves. Property of any kind is not at all events their strong point, and it is easy enough to be generous with other people's."

"You are right as to the slaves, Richard," replied my father rather warmly. "They have never had any slaves since the Irish clergy denounced the Bristol slave-trade in 1172. I should like to see our clergy follow their example now."

"Pray, Mr. Danescombe," said my stepmother, "let politics be banished this one evening. Let us speak of something more suitable to the occasion."

"What would you have, Euphrasia?" he replied smiling. "Politics are only the gossip of centuries. I wish Dick was here," he added. "You have a letter from him, Piers. Did he say anything about himself?"

"Nothing about himself," said Piers, "scarcely anything about anybody but Nelson."

The "scarcely" meant Amice Glanvil, with whom at the moment our cousin was vehemently in love; "this time," he said, "no boy's fancy, but serious, a matter of life and death!"

"I wonder if the lad says true," said my father. "I should not wonder. The judgment of the people who work under a man, especially that of the young, often squares more with the decision of the

centuries, than the judgment in high places. Pity he should be defending that abominable Neapolitan tyranny!"

"There is something in the letter about the execution of a Neapolitan admiral," said Piers, "and the corpse rising out of the sea and following the ships upright. It was horribly like the Day of Judgment, Dick says, and the poor fellow was called a patriot."

"Poor Caraccioli!" replied my father. "It was a sad business. The noblest helping to sustain the vilest. No wonder the sailors shuddered."

"It was only the weight of the stones attached to the feet, which caused it," said my uncle, dryly.

"Very probably," replied my father. "I suppose the Day of Judgment will be brought about by some weight proving too heavy at last. Everything must sink or float by some balancing of weights,—even Neapolitan courts. The wretched thing is to keep up things that ought to sink, by weights unfairly attached, the weight of Nelson's nobleness and England's freedom, for instance, attached to a defunct tyranny, making it float after living men with a ghastly semblance of life."

We were drifting into politics again.

"At all events," responded my uncle, "I suppose you are not too cosmopolitan to rejoice in the capture of Malta."

"One defunct thing safely buried, at all events, that old order of the Knights," said my father. "Yet that had a grand life and meaning in it once."

“Your old admiration, the French republic, has life enough in it, at all events,” said my uncle. “As to meaning, I cannot say. Not exactly the same as it began with, certainly. War and victories on all sides. In Italy, Marengo; in Bavaria, Hohenlinden on the 2d, a month since. The Czar an adorer of the new Alexander—Napoleon Bonaparte. And even as to your blacks, the Convention decrees emancipation in 1794, and their ships ravage your Free Black Colony in Sierra Leone the same year. What French liberty means, is not so plain.”

“It means the First Consul!” said my father, very sadly. “Richard, you are a little hard on me. How could I help hoping? Every one hoped twenty years since. Religious men hoped; and even scepticism hoped. Rousseau, and Tom Paine himself, only wanted to destroy the old beliefs, not for the sake of destroying, but because they fancied they had a new panacea for humanity. For once the toiling, silent multitudes—the *multitudes the Master had compassion on*, Richard, made themselves heard, and not having learned letters, they spoke in whirlwinds. And the first breath of the whirlwind swept away the Bastile, and seemed to let in a flood of light, and make a world of room for men to think, and form, and reform in. No one thought whirlwinds would build. We only thought they would clear the ground for the builders. But so far, in France at least, the builders have not come, and the whirlwind having destroyed the Bastiles, whirls round the dust of their ruins, on and on,

blinding men's eyes and stifling their breath. In England, please God, we will begin with building, not with destroying. It makes a very irregular edifice, but at least it does not make a world of ruin. The difficult thing now, Richard," he concluded, with a tremor in his voice, "is not to repent, but to hope. You are a teacher of Christianity. Teach us to hope."

"It is five minutes to twelve!" interposed Mrs. Danescombe.

We had made no plan of greeting the coming century. But silence fell on us all. My father went to the window and opened it. We stood near it with hushed breath, hand in hand, mine in Piers' and father's. I knew Reuben Pengelly and the Methodists were watching in the New Year together; and at the old house across the marketplace Madame des Ormes, and Claire, and Loveday were keeping vigil. The still air seemed palpitating with prayer. And clear and deep at last fell the twelve midnight beats of the fine silvery old church bell. It was not tolling in its first new century!

And then, through the still, frosty night, the chimes rang out in their slow, lingering music the Old Hundredth Psalm.

We all stood still until the last vibration died away along the empty, unlighted, silent streets.

"The old sacred voice is teaching us to hope!" said my father at last. "'Praise God'—there is no surer path to hope." And then in a lower voice:

he added, as if to himself, “*all creatures here below.*” Yes, we are only below! The whirlwind and darkness are only below. ‘Praise Him above, ye heavenly host.’ They are doing it. *They* have learned the way to hope, the only way. Richard,” he said, grasping my uncle’s hand, “let us have a prayer, and part.”

My uncle looked perplexed. Family prayer even was not then a common institution, extempore prayer was an idea that would never have occurred to him, and the Liturgy itself was scarcely conceivable to him, except as a whole, in its ordered sequence. And no prayer-book was at hand to read out of. Moreover, there was something curious in kneeling except in a pew or at a bedside. Yet, he did not like to decline. He hesitated a little, and then did about the best thing that could have been done.

We all knelt at the long, low window-seat, the stars twinkling on us through the frosty air, and the little star in Loveday Benbow’s window and in Madame’s shining across the market-place; and in a low voice my uncle said, “*Let us pray for the whole state of Christ’s church militant here on earth.*”

So we entered the new century, as I trust, in communion with the whole church, suffering and battling in this transitory life, and departed from it to the King in his heavenly kingdom; always militant here, and always militant in hope.

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CHAPTER XIV.

THE next morning I remember feeling it almost strange how unchanged the world looked. The sun dawned, not on a new century, but simply on a new day.

But then, how much a new day means! A new morning and evening, the only eras nature recognizes, illuminating the heavens for their birth and close, with unwearied varieties of festive ceremonial, of gladness and of tender solemnity.

Daily life began again, grouped not around centuries, but around its own endlessly varying work and interests.

Although a century had begun, I could not forget the important event immediately before me and Piers; for it was settled at last that Piers and I were to pay the long-promised visit to our cousins the Crichtons at Clapham.

A journey to London was not indeed as formidable a thing as fifty years before. It could be accomplished, travelling early and late, in three days. My father had been to London six times, Mrs. Danescombe once. There were at least twenty

people in Abbot's Weir who had spent some days, at one time of their life or another, in the great city. The chief mantua-maker, if she had not achieved the journey herself, procured her fashions from a friend in the neighboring large town, who went annually. Still it was distinctly an event.

Preparations were made for it about on the same scale as in these days for a voyage by the overland route. It was still a popular belief among us that the denizens of the metropolis were, in the lower strata, a people of preternatural cunning and acuteness, against whose machinations inexperienced young persons should be carefully warned; and among the higher classes, endowed with a preternatural perfection of good manners of which provincial young persons were to stand in awe.

People warned you, congratulated you, gave you solemn auguries, or anxious good wishes, according to their experience and disposition, as at the beginning of a new stage of your existence.

Madame Glanvil, indeed, who prided herself on a certain fine old county flavor, and would have held it a degradation to tone down even a certain rough provincialism of accent, to the common smoothness of people who were "no better known in one county than in another," by no means shared this sentiment.

I had rather a shrinking from her rough handling of the subject. But that day I had to encoun-

ter her; my first New Year's greeting being promised to Amice.

Madame Glanvil received me with her most critical air.

"Don't bring back any fine London airs to me," she said, sitting in her high-backed chair, and pinching me mentally between her fingers, like the pinch of snuff she was taking, "or come mincing your words small like the stones in those new roads of Mr. MacAdam's, till there's no telling what they are or where they come from. Townsfolks are townsfolks, and nothing better, whether the town is where the palaces and Parliament Houses happen to be, or any other. And you Danescobes are better than that, at least on one side. And above all," she added, her manner changing from rough play to sharp and serious warning, and her eyes giving out one of their stormy steely flashes, "don't bring home any new-fangled nonsense of religion or philanthropy. I know where you are going well enough, and the kind of cant they talk at Clapham; calling themselves 'poor sinners' and 'worms of the dust,' and all the time fancying they can see everybody's duties and set everybody right all the world over! That they call 'saving faith.' Believing any wicked lies against their own countrymen and countrywomen, and crying and sighing over any lazy runaway of a black that comes whining to them! And that they call philanthropy. All I know is such religion and such philanthropy don't set foot in Court while the breath is in my body. And that, Bride

Danescombe, I hope you quite understand. Methodists there will be, I suppose, as long as there are poor ignorant fools to listen to them, and as far as I see, among such they do no great harm. It keeps them from worse, as we set fire to the furze when it grows too wild. And I allow they are better than Jacobins. But Methodists in Mufti, Methodists turned parsons, or parsons turned Methodists, and worse than all, Methodists turned philanthropists, that is Jacobins and Methodists in one, I never can and will never abide. And that is what they are at Clapham. I would as soon send Amice to Paris, to learn religion from the French convention. But there's your father's weak point, and he must take the consequences. Only you understand, I mean what I say. Forewarned is forearmed."

Then, half amused at the warmth she had worked herself into, and pleased to see me unmoved, as I always was when her assaults in any way touched my father, she added, "Poor little maid, you stand fire pretty well. Come with me, and I will show you something, I'll be bound you care for more than Methodism or philanthropy, black or white." And she walked before me up the old oak staircase into her own bedroom, and there, drawing out from a Japan cabinet sundry treasures of lace and ancient jewelry, she presented me with a piece of choice old English point, and with a pendant of amethyst.

I should greatly have liked not to take them. They seemed to me missiles thrown at Granville

Sharpe, Mr. Clarkson, Mr. Wilberforce, and all the Clapham names I delighted to honor.

But Amice clasped the jewel round my neck.

"I know you would like to throw them at Granny's feet," she murmured, "or to subscribe them to an anti-slavery society. But one would be melodramatic, and the other dishonest. So submit."

And I submitted.

Amice and I walked back through the woods to Abbot's Weir.

The air was clear and frosty; the river beside which our path wound mingled its tinkling icicles with the rush of its many waters over the rocks.

"I like a day such as this," Amice said. "There seems room in the world to breathe. The sky seems so boundless and yet so near, and one's own body, like the river, so strong and free; not a burden, but a power. But *I* am not a power!" she added suddenly, "not a river, indeed, nor a rock to stop it, only a pebble. All women are no more than that."

"Nothing is really a power," I said, "except in its own place."

"Yes, that is your religion," she said; "God in everything. Do you know, Bride, I have been puzzling out church histories and philosophies, and all kinds of books, in my grandfather's library. Books are the only world in which I am free—free to think: and that is why I care about them. If Piers could not make and work, he would understand what books are better. By-and-by he will;

and I have come to the conclusion there are only two religions — Pantheism and Dualism. Polytheism is only the popular side of Pantheism."

"Among the heathen, you mean," I suggested.

"Not at all," she replied. "We may call ourselves what we like, but you are a Pantheist and I am a Dualist. You believe in one power—good; and I in two—good and evil."

"Of course I believe there is the devil, Amice," I said.

"You think you do," she said, "but you think of him as of Attila, the scourge of God; vanquished and swept over by the tide of victory ages ago; or as of an extinct race of wolves or tigers, prowling maliciously around the folds they dare not ravage. I believe in him as I believe in this terrible Napoleon Bonaparte; and I have not the least idea how the war is to end."

"He *is* vanquished," I said. "I am quite sure how the war will end. But of course I am not sure how this campaign will end."

"You are thinking of Clapham," she said, "and its campaign against wrongs, against *us*, Bride Danescombe, the slaveholders. I can tell you how that will end. Slavery will be abolished, sooner or later, in ten, say, or twenty or forty years; that is, such slavery as Acts of Parliament can abolish. But things are not so simple as you and Piers and Clapham think. That is the perplexity about the Bible. All the problems there are so simple. There is Christ and Satan, the world and the

Church, light and darkness, scarlet and white, Babylon and the Bride. But here nothing is simple; it is all twilight, and intermixing of every color, and complications of every form. While this contest is going on in Parliament, generations are finishing the warfare, and passing away to be judged. I am passing on to be judged, Bride, and my poor slaves are passing on, and we shall meet there, and we cannot meet here; and it seems as if I might do everything, and I can do nothing. How can I help believing in two powers?"

Her voice and her whole frame quivered, and she stood still.

"How could I help believing them almost equal? at least," she added, with a sudden illumination of her whole countenance, "I did believe so till last night."

In all our intercourse, intimate as it had been, implied as all this had been, she had never spoken directly thus before.

She sat down on the stump of a tree, and, looking down, began to write on the ground with her foot.

"Where do you think I spent last night?" she resumed, suddenly looking up, her whole face radiant. "In the church, by the tombs of my forefathers. Granny does not know, of course. But I was quite sure it would do me good, and quite sure she would not let me go. So I took Chloe and went. To-day I shall tell her. She will storm, and then she will smile, and she will call me

mad, and like me rather the better for doing it, and for daring her. It was so strange, Bride, in the night. The wood was as weird as the church. Indeed the church felt quite homelike after it. Nature is *not* all good and sweet. *She* is dualistic at all events. She has tigers and serpents, and hurricanes and volcanoes, and earthquakes and avalanches; and even in her tame state here in England, her winds and rivers moan and roar with voices not altogether angelic. They did, at least, last night. To-day the wind is a playmate—the waters are trickling and sparkling, leaping and coursing like horses set free on the moors. Last night they crept and whirled and plashed sullenly into terrible dark, deep pools, where they could drown people; and the winds wailed and laughed and jabbered and made sudden angry rushes at us.”

“’Tis conscience that makes cowards of us all,” I said smiling.

“It was not conscience,” she said, “and I was not afraid. It was simply the night, the dark side, *which is always there*. It was the beautiful tamed leopard showing her teeth. They may call her a nurse of men if they like. But she is a nurse of another race, a passionate, tropical creature. If she loves us sometimes, at other times she turns on us, and envies and hates us, and in her rage will do us any mischief she can. One does not know what dark old memories are haunting and maddening her; perhaps it is those mighty fallen spirits of Milton’s. Their memories are bitter enough. At

any rate, it is very strange to me that men, poets and others, can go on sentimentalizing about nature as if she were a beautiful, meek, passive creature, that meant us nothing but good."

"But you got into the church?"

"Yes; there it was different; there I felt at home."

"Yet," I said, "some people would think the church, with the tombs and the silence, far more dreadful at midnight than the woods."

"Because they think the dead are there. We are Christians, and *we know there are no dead,*" she said in a low voice. "The dust of those who died is there—all that nature can touch or dissolve. Certainly I am not afraid of that, no more now than on the first day when they let us kiss the cold hands. If those who have died were there, Bride," she added, her rich voice becoming tremulous, "certainly you and I would feel something very different from fear. There are two tombs there, you know, of my ancestors. I knelt between them, and it helped me. One was the Crusaders, with the crossed feet, the rigid, recumbent, stone limbs and helmed head, and the reverent clasped hands. That helped me. He had lived in his day for something more than hunting and feasting, doing what he liked, and adding field to field: He had toiled through mountain and plain, and done things he did not like, fought and hungered and suffered just to rescue that little sacred spot of earth from the Infidel, just because for three days the Lord who died for us had been buried

there. How simple the combat seemed to him! Infidel and believer, Turk and Christian, a plain, visible piece of earth to rescue from undeniable visible flesh-and-blood foes, and he would have done his work, and pleased the Master; as simple as for Abraham, or Moses, or David, or Daniel. How easy for him to dare or to sacrifice anything, everything! So sure he must have been and so single-hearted."

"But it was not so sure! at least it does not seem so to us," I said.

"That is the worst of it. The ways which seem so plain at the time are not always those which shine out unquestionable afterwards. The Elizabethan monument helped me more. The husband on the couch, not recumbent, reclining. I like the recumbent, prayerful effigy better. But of course he would not be there reposing if it did not mean that the active work of life were over for him. Beside him the wife kneeling in prayer, with all the children in the quaint ruffs and robes kneeling behind her. I have always been attached to that family of my ancestors. The whole of them seem waiting, just as I am. The father waiting for death and its awakenings; the mother and the children for life and its duties. So they have knelt for two hundred years. I knelt beside them, and tried to pray. Their path could not have been so simple. The Reformation had come, and the world had grown very entangled and complicated. What numbers of good people thought the word

and will of God, others thought heresy and self-will. It must have been like it is now. They had need to pray and wait. It was good to kneel beside them in the silence. There is wonderful help in silence."

"We can seldom have silence like that," I said.

"No," she said; "it seemed to take substance—a silence and a darkness that might be felt. The wind moaned a little through the churchyard trees, but it seemed in another world. It *was* in another world. It is not spirit, with all its spiritual seeming; it is of the earth earthy, as much as the dust it raises. There was no sound near me but poor Chloe's breathing, and she was too frightened to do anything but breathe, or rather pant. But Chloe was not in any other world. She was not of the things that perish, poor dear, but of the things that abide, for love abides; and she is little else, to God and to me, and to all. She helped me most of all, most of all, Bride. It was through Chloe, Bride, that this wonderful light came to me. It was so strange. It came down on me with overwhelming power, that our Lord, the Son of God—oh, Bride, think!—had died the death of a slave; a death only slaves could die!

"The nature He stooped to is ours—and what stooping! but the *place* He stooped to, the death He was obedient to, is that of the Cross, that of the slave.

"I cannot tell you what I felt. It seemed to me as if the Blessed Lord Himself were kneeling

there beside me, as He did in Gethsemane, identified with poor Chloe, looking up to God and saying of her and her poor, low, despised race, 'I in thee, and they in Me;' and then round on His Christendom—His England—on me, Bride, saying, 'Why persecutest thou *Me*?'

"One with Chloe—that seemed clear! But oh, Bride, yet also one with me! Stooping as low to reach me as to reach her—*lower, since pride is lowest of all*, and love is highest of all; and I was full of pride, and she was full of love.

"And I wept as I never wept before. And I said in my heart to Him that I would be one with those poor, despised ones, would live for them and under the burden of their wrongs, until they could be lifted off, and do my best to lighten their wrongs, and succor and sustain them, and lead them to Him, all my life.

"And then the great church bell boomed out midnight, and the chimes rang out, '*Praise God.*' And it seemed like a voice of which others might say, '*It thundered;*' but to me it said, '*This is my beloved Son in whom I am well pleased, hear Him.*' And my vow was accepted, and I was consecrated to His service, in the least of those His brethren forever.

"Oh, Bride, I rose so joyful. And then I kissed Chloe, and we cried together. Poor Chloe is always ready for that. And even the 'how' perplexes me no longer. If he will take us as His servants, it is His work, not ours, and He has to

show us the way. That is his part, you know, and He will not, cannot fail. But still I am more of a Dualist than a Pantheist. I am sure the battle is very real, and I cannot tell how my part of it will end."

Then we gave each other a long embrace, and at the little gate of the wood we parted, and her last words were—

"Perhaps at Clapham you may find out something, Bride, to help me to help. We are women, you know, now, and it is time our work should begin."





CHAPTER XV.

THE leave-takings before our journey to London were numerous.

Piers and I were, in a way, the property of the whole town. My father's genial ways, his large employment of labor, his real "public spirit," which made the well-being of Abbot's Weir a matter of as grave interest to him as that of his own affairs, his countless unostentatious private kindnesses, of which we were often the ministers, the long establishment of the family in the town and neighborhood, gave us a relationship to the little community, isolated from all other communities by the steep and muddy lanes which led to it, and by the rocky moors and furzy downs which bordered its territories on more than one side.

One custom instituted by my own mother had brought me into contact with many of our neighbors. Every Saturday, in my childhood, I, and afterwards Piers, had been despatched laden with a great basketful of fresh fruit and vegetables from our large garden to various people who had known, or might have known, better days, and who could

only be relieved without being wounded, in the form of a kind of hospitality. "You know the sunny slopes on which they grew," my father would say, "and that always makes things taste better." Then there were the workmen, who, according to their prejudices or intelligence, regarded our going as a glorious voyage of discovery, or a perilous venture; and the wagoners, who warned us solemnly against "them racing fast coaches;" the shopkeepers, especially Mrs. Burnaby the confectioner, who made the most original and artistic sweetmeats, and whose shop we only avoided through delicacy, so liberal was her heart, "who expected we should think little of her tarts when we came back, and yet we might find there were a few things they did not do better in London;" and Mrs. Wilmington, the bookseller, whose whole little store of books used to be at our service when childish illnesses drove us to literature, and who always in after-days kept for us the first reading of Sir Walter, and who, having an enlarged mind in her prim little body, assured us that "the best books had not been written in London, whatever anybody might say." And, above all, there was Priscy Pengelly, who condoled with us, and ominously "hoped that we might find things as we left them;" and Reuben, who admitted that it would be a fine thing to see John Wesley's great chapel at the Foundry, "up to London," and to see Squire Wilberforce, but reminded us that London was no nearer heaven than Abbot's Weir,

“though sure enough, it was as near.” “As near,” he concluded, passing his rough hand over his eyes, “never you forget that. And God forbid I should, though it does seem cruel far away.”

And there were all the things and persons that could *not* be taken leave of—the dear familiar dropping-well, and garden slopes, and the Leas and the Leat, and the hills, and the little children, who could not understand leave-takings, and would so soon forget, and the dear dogs, who did quite understand to their distress that we were going away, but could not understand we were to return, and would *not* forget.

And Madame des Ormes, who said—

“Your London is not to you what our Paris was to us. That was like the *heart* of France—poor, passionate, foolish heart—which we loved, and which has lost itself and betrayed us. London is only brain, I think, to England, very busy and clever, but I do not see that you love it. It will not absorb you, my child, or make you forget us; I am not afraid. London is very large,” she continued, “but perhaps you will be able to give this packet into the hand of my friend. It is a letter of our martyred Madame Elizabeth, which she will like to see, too precious to send by post. And for you, you must take some little souvenir of the old Frenchwoman for whom you had so much goodness.” And she placed in my hand a little bracelet of the renaissance work, with a locket enamelled with roses and Loves, and also, I suppose to neu-

tralize my vanity, a copy of Thomas a Kempis in French. "You will not object to the little Loves?" she said, clasping it round my arm. "Baptize them, my child, with your own tender spirit, and they become little angels."

In Claire's eyes there were tears, and a tremor was in her voice.

"I have painted you a flower," she said; "I had nothing else."

And she gave me a little painted velvet pineushion, with forget-me-nots.

I missed it the first day of our journey, and never found it till long years afterwards, poor little faded treasure.

Miss Felicity shook her head and compressed her lips. She had never liked people wandering from their kith and kin and all belonging to them, and it was of no use to pretend she did. She had seen no good come of it. People, especially young people, came back fancying themselves half a head taller because they had stood on the top of St. Paul's, and a whole world wiser, because they had seen a few miles more of it. But when you came to think of it, crowds were made up of men, women, and children, and men, women, and children were no bigger and no wiser because there were a hundred thousand of them at hand instead of three. However, she had done her best to ground us well, and she hoped we should come back as good as, on the whole, we went.

Loveday said little. But her dear eyes shone more than usual.

"You will see the men who are fighting the battle for us all," she said. "Don't let anything make you mistake them. The good fight is fought, visibly, remember, not by angels, but by men and women and little children, by poor King David, and by Jonathan, who could not do without the honey. You would not have thought the dear apostle Peter had walked on the sea, and would die on the cross, if you had heard him that dreadful night, and seen him warming himself at the fire. Did you say you wish I were going with you, my dear? It seems as if it would be a wonderful help: and I shall so miss you, Bride and Piers! But we shall see them all one day, you know," she added, "see them *at their very best*, and *for a long time* be *at home* with them, Bride!"

And she looked so near seeing the just made perfect, with her dear pallid face, and the far-away look in her eyes, that I could do nothing but cry and feel as if the parting were for ever, though I insisted to her that it was but for a very little while.

My father made less of it than any one in words.

"One would think the children were going to be married, or going to emigrate to Nova Scotia," he said, "from the fuss made about it."

He entirely declined to allow that the expedition was anything of importance, but meanwhile he was constantly recurring to it with a tender solicitude which often made me ready to give it

up, incessantly planning one small comfort or another, with a certain uneasy sense that he had to be both mother and father to us, and did not exactly know how.

Mrs. Danescombe, on the other hand, told me that it was a most momentous crisis of my life. One could not tell what might not depend on our making a pleasant impression on our cousins, who were, she understood, most influential and highly cultivated people. And she gave Piers and me directions as to forms of address and behavior which would have infallibly given us an air of elaborately concealed rusticity, had we not forgotten them all and fallen back on our natural manners.

She was most solicitous also as to preparations of clothes, deeming no mantuamaker in Abbot's Weir sufficiently fashionable, until my father suggested that a smaller wardrobe and a fuller purse would be far more advantageous; in consequence of which suggestion we were sent away with light luggage, well-filled purses, and endless recommendations to observe and bring back the fashions which our "influential" cousins affected.

At the last moment there were so many forgotten trifles to be remembered, and so many last directions to be received, and so many fears of being late, that there was no leave-taking at all.

We were in the weekly coach struggling up the steep hill which led out of the town, Piers and I, launched on the wide world together, in the dusk of the winter morning, before I had time to think.

It was not, however, until the last familiar grey Tor had vanished out of sight, at the next town, where we were to change from the heavy Abbot's Weir coach into what was considered the marvel of speed and convenience which was to convey us by the main road to London, and until the last face and voice familiar from childhood had been left behind, that I felt we were really off.

From the warm nest into the world—"the cold world," as some people called it.

I did not think the world seemed cold at all. Every one was very protective and kind to us, more protective than Piers always altogether liked, he being now for the first time my "natural protector." But how warm the nest had been I had certainly never felt before.

Yet after all, some of the best warmth of the nest was with me. I had Piers to watch over; and Piers had me. And most delightful it certainly was to belong entirely to each other, and to have the world before us. Since we were children we had not had such long unbroken talks. And now we were better than children, it seemed to us, and the things we had to talk about in what seemed then the long common past, and the long unrolled future, were of endless interest.

And Piers reminded me in so many ways of father, countless little turns of manner and little dry, droll sayings, and little thoughtful attentions to one's comfort. And yet so different, more re-

served, more decided, more definite, more of the master about him; people did what he said as a matter of course; less seeing on all sides, perhaps seeing better the one point to be reached; less sanguineness, yet more hope.

It distresses me that I can picture him so little in words; that picture always so clear to me. Especially Piers. It was the absence of self-assertion, with the quiet power of commanding because he knew what and when to command, and did not care in the least for ruling for its own sake, but only for getting things rightly done, and people effectively helped, the gravity, with the under-current of joyousness, the quick sense of ludicrous incongruity, with the under-current of tender, helpful, chivalrous sympathy that made satire impossible to him. And when I have put down all these words, I find I have only balanced one tint against another, and left no color at all; no picture, no individual, but a type. And he was altogether individual, and so full of life and variety, entirely unlike any one else. Well it would not be easy to describe an oak, the most individual tree in existence, to any one who had not seen it. A branch here, and a branch there, and leaves everywhere, and the branches full of every conceivable twist, moulded by winds of circumstance, and the whole full of all conceivable majestic symmetry, growing by inward laws of life, and the root grasping the earth as if for eternity, and the leaves fluttering

each with its own delicate variety of tint and form,
and the shadow a shelter that has sheltered and
will shelter generations. But there my oak was,
and that was enough for me.



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CHAPTER XVI.

WE travelled for the most part outside the coach, and not through an altogether happy land. A series of bad harvests had raised the price of bread, while the French war barred our access to the abundant corn fields of the Continent.

The people, often so heroically patient in sufferings they feel to be inevitable, were by no means persuaded that the hunger they had now to endure was inevitable.

The one gigantic imperial form of Napoleon had scarcely yet effaced in the popular imagination the promises of the Republic. England was by no means of one heart and soul in the war, in any class or station. There was a suspicion in many minds that we were starving ourselves to enslave our neighbors. From the commencement, not only Mr. Fox, but Mr. Wilberforce, courageously abandoning his party, had been against it; and by this time the majority, enlightened by the failure of our large subsidies and our little army on the Con-

continent, and not even consoled by our splendid successes at sea, were brought round to his opinions.

Moreover there was another gigantic imperial power rising not before the imagination, but before the eyes, and in spite of the hands, of the people; the power of Steam.

Against this the people had dashed themselves again and again in blind fury, in what were even now beginning to be the manufacturing districts in the north, burning the machinery, and hunting the inventors out of the country; poor human hands and hearts wounding themselves like children in vain assaults against the impassive irresistible force of material progress!

Our way, however, did not lie through these more disturbed districts, but through the agricultural lands of the south.

It was not so much riot and ruin that we saw as quiet uncontenting misery; hollow-eyed, hungry faces, feeble bent forms that should have been those of strong men, and worn old faces that should have been those of children. Misery, hunger, starvation; patient, not through hope, but through hopelessness.

In one town indeed through which we passed, we found broken windows in the bakers' shops, and men still hanging about in muttering groups, the sullen remnants of a mob recently hindered from burning the flour-mills.

The bewildered magistrates had met, and having consulted how to compel a reduction of

prices, had felt the bakers and millers too strong to be assailed, and had therefore valiantly directed their attack on the market-women, who were solemnly and severely commanded to sell their butter at tenpence a pound.

The government mode of relief was scarcely less blind than that of the mob. While the mob attacked the bakers, Parliament passed a bill enjoining the use of brown bread.

Through this hungry and bewildered England the four horses of the stage-coach bore us, toiling up the green hills of our southern counties, and galloping across the many heaths and commons then still free; over plains historical with battles of old civil wars; passing in the twilight the weird giant stone-circles of a forgotten faith; seeing the spires or fretted towers of old cathedrals grow from grey delicate lines into majestic solidity as we approached; everywhere our arrival an event; welcomed in village and city inns by facetious hostlers, officious waiters, jolly landlords, and patronizing landladies. But always behind and around were those silent languid groups of hungry-eyed men and women, and grave children.

At last we drew near the great City. Two masses stood out distinctly, through the smoke and the twilight, the dome of St. Paul's, and the twin towers of Westminster Abbey. With these last we claimed a kind of kinship through our old Printing House in the Abbey churchyard of Abbot's Weir, where one of the earliest printing-presses in

England had co-existed with the Caxton press at Westminster.

My father had often told us of it, and the little link seemed to make those abbey towers like a welcome.

There was little time, however, to observe buildings, at no time the characteristic glory of London.

We had entered the streets; and the multitudes and masses of human beings seemed to seize and overwhelm me, heart and mind, like a great Atlantic wave, and take away my breath. I seemed to pant to get to an end, a shore. And there was no end, no shore! only always, on and on, those busy, crowded streets, those wildernesses of human dwellings. I felt altogether lost, my individuality swept away and drowned, in the bewildering, busy whirlpool of those unknown crowds.

I could not account for it. If I could not have held Piers's hand I think I must have cried out, like somebody drowning. As it was, I squeezed his arm as if I were clinging to him for life. He laughed, and asked if I was afraid, and said it was as easy to the coachman to drive through London streets as to one of our wagoners to plod through the lanes of Abbot's Weir.

I knew the feeling was exaggerated and unreasonable, but I could neither explain nor help it.

And then, all at once, floating on my heart the words—

"And Jesus seeing the multitudes, had compassion on them."

They relieved me. Tears came, and I let them flow quietly.

All the majesty of that pitying Presence came over me! And I seemed to nestle like a child to that tender mighty Heart. I felt there was room for one of those overwhelming crowds *there*, and feeling this I was at home.

At the coach door we were met by Cousin Crichton. He did not look in the least overwhelmed by the din or the crowd. He looked too solid and, at the same time, too buoyant to be overwhelmed by anything. The evils he could not beat off like a rock, he would float over like a buoy. He welcomed us as if he had known us for years.

"No more luggage than that!" he said, stowing away our boxes in the hackney coach he had ready for us. "Well done, Cousin Bride, I will take you to the Wall of China, if you like, with the same equipage, if only as a standing protest against my girls."

I felt a little abashed. He did not mean to be sarcastic, I was sure. His voice and his face were too round and hearty for satire. But in the grave footman who helped me into the carriage I detected a shade of condescension, inevitable from so solid a personage towards a young lady whose wardrobe could be compressed into one trunk. Also, I felt

it necessary to justify the liberality of my father's arrangements.

"We thought Cousin Barbara would help us to buy suitable things," I answered, apologetically.

"Apologizing for your virtues? Don't, my dear! At least not before your cousins, I pray."

We crossed Westminster Bridge. The last faint gold of sunset was dying away over the broad river and in the frosty sky, but there was just enough color to contrast with the dim grey of the Abbey towers, and the roofs of the old Houses of Parliament.

Again that absurd inclination to tears came over me. The Abbey brought back our abbey, and Abbot's Weir, and father; and the Houses of Parliament seemed sacred with memories of Love-day, and of the eloquent voices that had pleaded there for the slaves, and would go on pleading there until the great wrong was righted.

As we went on, Cousin Crichton poured out information which he thought would interest us. He pointed out Mr. Wedgwood's works, in Greek Street, Soho, and thence diverged to Bolton and Watt's, at Soho near Birmingham, and spoke of engines of a thousand horse power, and said they were beginning a social revolution greater than the French.

He showed us Covent Garden Theatre. "National!" he remarked, "whether we approved of

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it or not, and historical. David Garriek acted there; Hannah More's friend, you know."

He told us, as we drove over Westminster Bridge, that there was a larger mass of stone in that bridge than in St. Paul's.

I felt I ought to be astonished at everything. Piers evidently took it all in, and was much interested.

But I had very vague ideas as to "horse powers" and comparative quantities of stone, and although I had certainly heard of David Garrick, I felt in disgraceful ignorance as to Mrs. Hannah More, apparently, in my uncle's eyes, the larger celebrity of the two.

At last I ventured to ask if it was really there, under those roofs, that Mr. Wilberforce spoke, and Mr. Clarkson got all that terrible anti-slavery evidence listened to, which it cost him such labor to collect?

He turned on me with a look of pleased surprise.

"Then the echoes of our battles have reached the quiet old town?"

"My father cares for nothing more!" I said. "We have heard about it all our lives."

He seemed moved, and gave my hand a hearty shake.

"Have you West Indians, then, in Abbot's Weir? What has roused up the dear, sleepy old town?"

"I don't think the old town is roused up," I said. "It is only father and Loveday Benbow."

"Benbow! I seem to know the name," he said.

"Her father is Lieutenant Benbow, and her mother was a Quaker, and she is an invalid, and has suffered much," I said, "but she cares for what the slaves suffer more than for all her own pain."

"Ah," he said, "the Quakers were always sound on that point; some of our best men are among them. So you have not had any abolition meetings," he continued, with a business-like practical eye to "the cause?" "Any slave-holders?"

"One," I said, "one of our dearest friends. But she hates it."

"Ah," he sighed, "she has seen it, I suppose."

And then he pointed out to me the house where Granville Sharpe lived.

"He is an old acquaintance, too, I suppose," he said smiling.

"The oldest of all," I said. "We like him best of all."

"A very sound man," he replied; "a little crotchety; peculiar views as to prophecy, but very sound."

I felt a little chilled at the term. Would Andromeda have liked to hear Perseus called nothing more sublime than "sound?"

"There he is!" exclaimed Cousin Crichton.

He stopped the coach, and I actually saw him;

looked into the fine face with the broad forehead, the delicate, feminine curves of the lip, the massive, resolute chin.

"Here is a young lady who is quite sound as to the blacks," said Cousin Crichton.

And Mr. Sharpe smiled benignantly in at the coach window, and I actually shook hands with him; had my hand in the friendly grasp of the hand that had rescued poor bruised and battered Jonathan Strong, and searched among the law-books and records, against the counsel of lawyers and judges, until it drew the true law of England to the light and laid the foundation of the liberty of all slaves in the righteous judgment of one free country.

I was quite beyond tears then.

"Thank you, that *is* worth coming to London for, Cousin Crichton!" I said, as we drove on again. "The first of them all; he who began it all!"

"Shall we see Mr. Clarkson?" I ventured to ask, feeling as if everything good were possible now.

"Clarkson? Ah, I am not sure. An excellent hard-working man; but he does not belong to Clapham" (the "but" sounded like "although") "a good hand at the foundations, Clarkson. But tomorrow you shall see Mr. Wilberforce's house, perhaps himself."

And that, I felt, was like saying, "You have

seen the ministers; to-morrow you shall see the king."

The coach drove through a handsome stone gateway, and round a wide sweep of lawn, and stopped at a porch, very Grecian and impressive, though vague as to style.

In a moment we were in the brilliantly-lighted drawing-room, with lamps in various places, and a table set with silver and with flowers, and a steaming urn, and a great glowing coal-fire, and a party of most cordially-minded cousins, who kissed us as if they had known us for years, and their father, as if they had parted from him for years, and all fell on us at once with various hospitable propositions, until Cousin Crichton came to the rescue.

"Stand back, girls. You set all ceremonial at defiance. Cousin Bride Danescombe, let me introduce you one by one, beginning at the beginning. You have heard of the Admirable Crichton. These are all Admirable Crichtons. This is Hatty, who has a talent for finding out the most wonderful people to admire; and this is Matty, who has a talent for finding out the most uncomfortable people to comfort; and this is Phœbe, who has a talent for finding out the most impracticable people to reform; and this," he added, placing my hand in his wife's, "is your Cousin Barbara, *the* Admirable Crichton, who has a talent for loving every one lovable or unlovable, and will certainly take to loving you. The boys may introduce themselves," waving his hand to three

tall young men. "And," he concluded, "there is the Lower House in the nursery. And there is little Martha up stairs." As he spoke of little Martha he unconsciously lowered his voice, as we do in speaking of something sacred; and I noticed she was the only one who had no pet name; the one little patient sufferer in that prosperous, joyous home. Any name that belonged to her became a pet name only by its being hers. To me, indeed, when I learned to love her, she made the prosaic-sounding name of Martha as sweet and high as "Mary," so that I had always, after knowing her, a prejudice to overcome against any of the many occasions in which poor Martha and her blundering love were held up to severe animadversion.

There was a wonderful glow about the whole evening; the welcome, the lights in such abundance as I had never seen, the glowing masses of coal in the large grate, to which I was not accustomed, the rosy glow on my cousins' faces, the tender motherly light in their mother's eyes.

Cousin Crichton declared I looked as fresh as if I had come out of a handbox. "But, talking of handboxes, girls," he added. "I should like you to see what your cousin can do with; or without!"

But Cousin Barbara said I must be tired, and gently led me up stairs.

Into such a bedroom! and with such a fire! I had never had a fire in my bedroom in my life,

except for a week when I had the measles. I felt I must in honesty disclaim such luxuries.

And there were book-shelves, and a sofa, and a writing-table with lovely exotic hot-house flowers on it, and a cheval-glass with lighted candles in brackets, and the fire-light flickering on the crimson damask draperies of such a magnificence of a bed! It would require a special ceremonial to get into it. The room was a residence; a house, a garden, a palace! My poor little trunk did look very meagre in it.

"How kind!" I said, "how luxurious and beautiful everything is! So much too good for me, Cousin Barbara. You must put me in some little room fit for a girl."

"I hope you will be comfortable, my dear," she said, "we do not wish to have luxuries, but we do try to make people comfortable."

She left me, and in a few minutes her kind soft voice was at the door again.

"My dear," she said, "you will not mind just looking in on little Martha. She has been expecting you, and she wants a kiss."

We went in.

There she lay, on a couch near the fire, her eager face welcoming me; her eyes with that wistful look of suffering in them questioning mine; her long, thin little hands still holding mine, so as not to let me go, when she had kissed me. The large eyes seemed satisfied with their answer, I

suppose partly because I could scarcely meet them for tears.

"Kiss me again, Cousin Bride," she said.

And the second kiss was not that of a stranger.

I felt there was one place at least in that great, glad, wealthy household where I should be wanted, and therefore should be at home.

Then one flying glimpse in their beds in the nursery at the Lower House, which unconstitutionally refused to go to sleep without seeing the new cousin.

Then down again to the full, bright room.

"You will excuse our having only brown-bread, and no pastry, and no sugar," said Cousin Crichton.

"The brown-bread is law, of course. The no pastry is our voluntary contribution to the scarcity; it seems a shame to be making into luxuries what others cannot get enough of to live on. But the no sugar is not compulsory. That, you know, is our protest against the slave-trade. Perhaps you take sugar."

Piers and I had given it up for years.

"Three hundred thousand, Clarkson found in one of his journeys, had done the same; and some persons refuse to sell it. A little self-denial does none of us any harm."

It seemed strange to me to associate the thought of self-denial with that abundant table, with its cold and hot meats and elaborate cakes, and foreign preserves and dried fruits, and hot-house grapes, and many luxuries new to my pro-

vincial imagination. But it seemed to gratify Cousin Crichton to feel we were seasoning our dainties with that little pinch of self-denial, so of course I said nothing.

I think the thought of those starving men and women and little children, of whom we had been seeing so many, would have made it difficult for me to enjoy anything as my cousin wished that evening,—(of course I was over-fatigued and over-excited,)—if it had not been for the thought of that dear little worn face up stairs.

This family also was, after all, bearing some share of the burdens of the world.

We had family prayers, (not then a matter of course), commenced by a very impressive procession of servants, headed by the portly housekeeper, a far more majestic person than Cousin Barbara, and closed by a frightened-looking little maid, whom I concluded must be one of Cousin Hatty's uncomfortable people to be comforted, or one of Phœbe's impracticable people to be reformed.

Very hearty and benevolent those prayers seemed to me, and very humble I am sure they were meant to be. Our unworthiness and absence of all merit was much lamented in them; and the whole world, black and white, heathen and Christian, were most affectionately remembered, our "poorer brethren" (among whom my cousins diligently labored); the millions of India and China, for whose sake the Church Missionary Society had just been instituted.

But somehow it felt as if we were people on a safe and sunny island interceding for those still struggling in the cold and perilous sea; people set apart in an oasis of exceptional plenty to shower down our alms and blessings on a hungry world.

Except in one tender little sentence, in which "the beloved member of this family who cannot be with us," was in a few words and tremulous tones commended to the merciful Father.

As I lay awake in my regal bed that night watching the delightful friendly flicker of the firelight on the mirror, the books, the mahogany wardrobe, the crimson damask curtains, I felt that "comfort" was a word that covered a good deal in the Crichton vocabulary; and that the distinction so clear to kind Cousin Barbara between "comfortable" and "luxurious" was rather too subtle for a provincial mind like mine.

I had never before known intimately a full complete family life such as this. It had so happened, I saw as I looked back to Abbot's Weir, that my little world there was a world of fragments. Our own home, happy as I was there, had never been complete since our mother went, and never could be more. Amice, Loveday, Miss Felicity, sweet little Claire and her mother, Uncle Fyford, and Dick Fyford were all fragments, more or less rugged or round, broken off from complete family life, or never having been moulded into it.

But this was a complete, warm, sunny, healthy, rich, round world, with all that were therein. Its

sun and moon, and all its stars were there. The father lovingly providing, generously bestowing, ruling, delighting in the children; the mother loving, sympathizing, understanding, serving; all the brothers and sisters so full of life, and activity, and happiness—so full of trusted and trusting love. How beautiful, how dear, how warm it was! And how much warmth it must shed all around! What a picture of "the Father's House" to those around it; what a foretaste of it to those within!

Yet my thoughts would wander back to that bewildered, battling, toiling, struggling England; that bewildered, battling world outside, and could find no rest.

Until they came back and did find rest in Cousin Martha's sick chamber.

Little Martha seemed to link that abounding prosperous family with the suffering, weary, struggling world outside, and to make the contrast less oppressive.

Our blessed Lord did not live in an oasis, when He was visibly in this world, any more than he lived in the deserts; but on the open hillsides; in the city streets where the lame and blind were, and the sick were brought to the doors; on the dusty roads; by the village well, thirsty and weary, really poor.

It seemed to me good for that prosperous household that the footprints of poverty should have come into one chamber of it, poverty of all that makes wealth enjoyable; thirst and weariness no

wealth could relieve; good that there should be one on whom the light of the Beatitudes came down direct with no necessity for symbolical explanation; not as a general declaration, but a personal benediction; not only, "Blessed are the poor in spirit, and they that hunger after righteousness," but "*Blessed be ye poor*; for yours is the kingdom of God. Blessed are ye that hunger now; for ye shall be filled."





CHAPTER XVII.

THE history of the anti-slavery struggle is not picturesque, at least the English portion of it. Its battle-fields are committee-rooms of the House of Commons, at no time the most picturesque of assemblies, the low taverns whence Clarkson hunted out witnesses, platforms of abolition meetings, largely attended by Quakers, the House of Commons itself; none of them very manageable material from a pictorial point of view. Its chief pictorial achievement is a terribly geometrical drawing of a section of a slave-ship with a cargo of black men and women stowed in it "like herrings in a barrel," only alive (at least, alive *when they were packed*), six feet by one foot four inches being the largest space allowed to any. Few historical pictures, however, have been so effective. It moved the House of Commons. "It seemed to make an instantaneous impression of horror on all who saw it."

Nor are the sacrifices made by the abolitionists such as sensationally to impress the imagination. Even such "a sacrifice to virtue" as three hun-

dred thousand persons giving up sugar, scarcely means as much to us as it appears to have meant to the sufferers, who, it is recorded, on the promise of the abolition of the slave trade in 1796, experienced "great joy," and "several in consequence returned to the use of sugar." And, excepting sugar, the majority of its advocates were not mulcted of a luxury. The heart-anguish endured by men like Clarkson in hunting up evidence among the lowest haunts of seaport towns or on the decks of slave-ships (steeping his soul in that bitter cup of cruelty and wretchedness until often sleep was impossible); and even the real personal danger he encountered; being once all but drowned in a storm he had braved to secure a witness, and once all but hustled into the sea by a band of slave-traders in the Liverpool docks—are not subjects to be dramatically represented.

Nevertheless in the quiet heroism of "patient continuance in well-doing," strong to keep alive, through half a century the glow of sympathetic enthusiasm, with no romantic visions or incidents to revive it, through the damps and chills of prosaic details of wrong and repeated failures of redress, the world has had few nobler examples.

The extent to which the trumpet was blown in some quarters afterwards, may have given subsequent generations a tendency to undervalue the work.

But Granville Sharpe, and Clarkson, and Wilberforce, and the leaders of the contest, themselves

blew no trumpet before them, called their deeds by no grandiloquent names, and never gave themselves out as martyrs or heroes, or anything but Christian men determined to lift off a great crime from their country and a great wrong from a continent.

I was a little disappointed at the feeling of my cousins with regard to the slave-trade. They were quite "sound" on the subject, of course; they wore Mr. Wedgwood's cameo of "a man and a brother;" they abstained from sugar; but they were a little tired of the contest. "It seemed as if it would never come to an end." It had gone on in the House of Commons more than ten years; and ten years to my cousins was the whole of conscious life. "It was remarkable," Mr. Clarkson says, at the beginning of the century, "that the youth of the rising generation knew but little about the question. For some years the committee had not circulated any books."

Nor was the anti-slavery literature very attractive, or very "suitable for circulation in families."

The mere brutality of the wrongs inflicted make their records as unreadable as the criminal columns of a sensational newspaper. Besides, the "newest thing," whether in bonnets or baretas, in vestments, secular or ecclesiastical, in heresies or in philanthropy—will have irresistible attractions for "the youth of both sexes." And anti-slavery was by no means the newest thing in

philanthropy. I found that, through Loveday's burdened heart and Amice's stricken conscience, I knew and felt more about it than my cousins. Except little Martha. "I cannot go with my sisters to the schools and the poor and the missionary meetings," she said; "but I can be as near the negroes as they can. They say the abolition struggle has gone on so long! but then, you know, that is *because the misery is going on so long*. I can sometimes make things to help the Moravian missionaries in the West Indies; and I can always ask God to help," she added, "at least almost always, when my head is not too stupid. And in the night when I cannot sleep, I often say over the poems and hymns about them by Cowper. They make my own little troubles seem nothing."

Moreover, the period during which I first visited Clapham was the time of a lull in the battle, although the preparations were continued, as Mr. Wilberforce said, "with uncooled zeal."

In 1800, 1801, 1802, and 1803 it was judged expedient to bring forward no motion for abolition in the House of Commons.

My cousins, however, were by no means irresponsible to my enthusiasm. They were quite ready most generously to acknowledge that perhaps they had not cared as much as they ought. "It was all so terrible and so hopeless, and there seemed nothing girls could do in it, and there were thousands of things so full of hope in which they

could help!" "They had rather left slavery to papa and Mr. Wilberforce and the House of Commons." "I must come and see the day-schools and Sunday-schools, and attend the meetings at Exeter Hall for the Bible Society, and the London Missionary Society, and the Church Missionary Society."

However prosaic and old-fashioned those words may sound now, to us, then, they were full of spiritual romance, fresh as young leaves, fragrant as spring flowers, strong and glad as a river just set free from the winter ice. It was a joyous tide of new life, and I was swept away in it.

England had begun to awaken to the fact that she had millions of ignorant children to be taught the elements of Christianity, and millions of heathen subjects to be evangelized, and a whole world within and without in sore need of help. During the next few years, she was to get used to the necessity of standing alone *against* the world in more ways than one; and she was also to rise to the duty of standing alone *for* the world, until the Christian world awoke to help her. As certain as it is that there were years—at the beginning of this century—in which our country alone stemmed the desolating despotism of Napoleon, until nation after nation awoke not at her call but by her deeds; so certain it is that at the beginning of this century she alone, with anything to be called a national enthusiasm, stemmed the torrent of a thousand wrongs; negro slavery, the cruel

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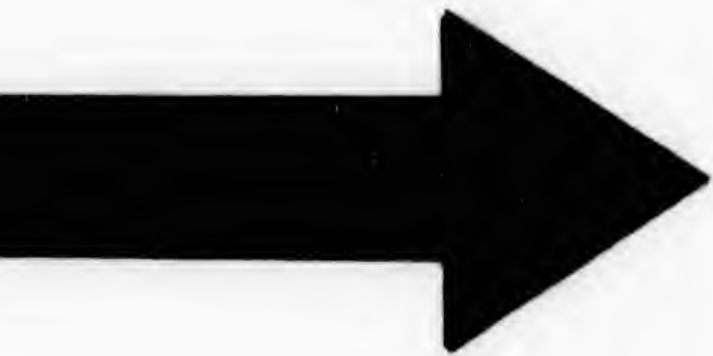
miseries of the mad in lunatic asylums, of the unfortunate and guilty in prisons, ignorance and darkness in Christendom and in heathendom, until nation after nation arose at the light of her shining, and the whole world is warmer and brighter for it, down to its darkest corners.

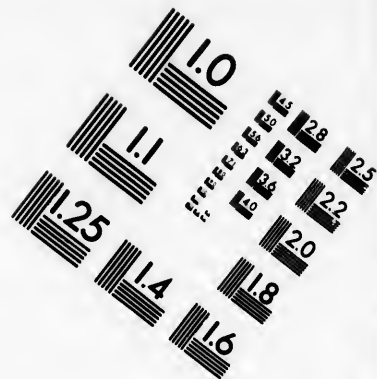
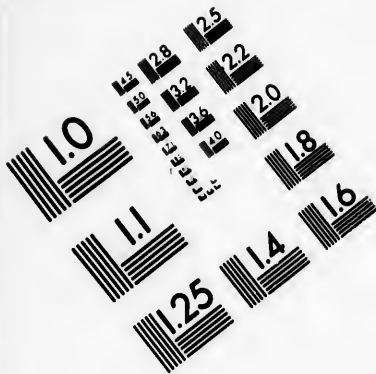
And equally certain is it that these philanthropic movements began not as the silent spreading of morning, or as the gradual, insensible diffusion of an atmosphere, but by the honest, hearty, sometimes blundering and ungraceful struggles against the stream of a few earnest Christian men and women, not a few of whom lived at Clapham.

Whatever else the religious life at Clapham was or failed to be, it was hearty, healthy, helpful—not occupied with its own sensations, but with its work; using its strength, steadily and joyfully, in “going about doing good.” “Doing good” was the aim, the motto of the school. “Being good” no doubt should come first; but the “doing” and the “being” are so intertwined that it is not always easy to see which begins; and it is easy to see that towards the “being” few means are so efficacious as the “doing.” Nor is “doing good” a propensity I think likely to be at all generally pushed to a dangerous extreme; although talking about it certainly may.

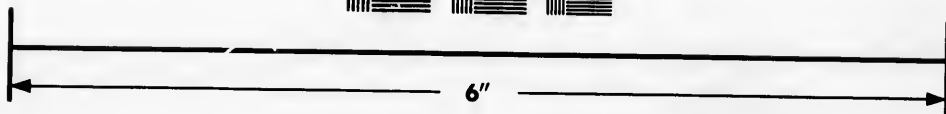
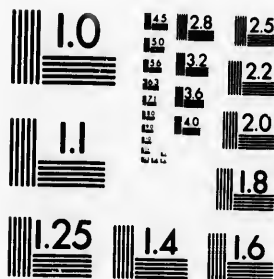
Those first weeks at Clapham shine back on me like one of Cuyp’s sunny landscapes. They were spent in a golden haze of piety, philanthropy, prosperity, and personal petting of myself. My cous-







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ins could never make enough of me. They were much given to superlatives, not from exaggeration, but from a certain glow through which they saw things and people. The boys accepted me as a kind of younger sister, with a variety which was piquant; and, in their way, were as good to me as the girls. Happily (although I believe to Mrs. Danescombe's disappointment), no thoughts of matrimony intruded themselves. Indeed, people were not in the habit of falling in love with me, as they were with Claire. The only persons who made that mistake in those days, were two elderly gentlemen, one of whom had an idea that I should devote myself efficiently to his eleven children, while the other considered that I reminded him of his first wife, an elderly lady recently departed; and a young curate, who, I believe, thought I should be a mother to him and his parish. On the contrary, people were in the habit of confiding to me their love affairs, as if I had been a venerable and indulgent grand-motherly person of seventy. I took it as a compliment, this being a prerogative of Loveday Benbow's, although it did seem beginning rather early.

The first Sunday at Clapham was a decided novelty to me. Instead of every one rising a little later in homage to the day of rest, every one was down half-an-hour earlier to begin what, to my cousins, was the busiest day in the week.

There was an amicable contest among my cousins which should have possession of me to intro-

duce me to her own special field of work. They all taught in Sunday-schools—Hatty, the class of young women in the school belonging to the church they attended: Matty, a class of infants in the same school; and Phœbe, a class of boys in a new school recently opened in a very poor and neglected district, which had sprung up like a fungus, with its crowded, ill-drained little houses, at some distance from the classic groves of Clapham, in a ragged outskirts of the great city.

To me, strange as it seems, Sunday-schools were altogether a new and unknown institution. No one had thought of establishing one in Abbot's Weir. With some reluctance I had to confess it. We had not even a day school, except a few collections of little ones, in scattered cottages, on a very limited scale as to numbers and instruction, kept by a few old women, chosen on the principle Oberlin superseded among his mountains, "too old to keep the goats, and therefore set to keep the children."

"No Sunday-school!" exclaimed a cousinly chorus. "What can the children do? and what can *you* do with Sunday?"

I supposed the good people taught their own children, as best they could, and the indifferent people let their children do what they liked. Of the bad people I could give no account. I had not met them; they seemed to keep out of the way. And as to how *we* spent Sunday? We went to church, and sat in the garden, and read

good books, and, above all, had long talks with my father.

"But, dear cousin Bride," said Phœbe, "the bad people generally do keep out of the way, don't you think? They have lost their way, you know. So we have to go out of the way to find them. And we have so many days to read good books in."

It was a new view to me.

If ever "false witness" was borne against our neighbor," it is in the accusation that the "evangelical party" were supremely occupied with "saving their own souls." They might, some of them, have narrow and shallow ideas of what "salvation" means (which of us has conceptions of that great word, deep and broad enough?), but at their own souls they certainly did not stop; laboring to save other people's souls was of the very essence of their religion.

Whatever else they believed or disbelieved, they believed most really that they had in their possession a remedy for the sins and sorrows of the whole world; and it was their duty and their delight to bestow and apply it; sometimes, no doubt, not discriminatingly or successfully. Have we found yet the school of spiritual medicine whose diagnosis is perfect, or whose treatment never fails?

The bright faces of my cousins did a large proportion of their evangelizing work, bringing sunshine wherever they came.

Hatty's class of young women surprised me a little by the spruceness and fashionableness of their attire. Many of them were dressmakers and young shopwomen. But there was no mistaking the intelligent interest in the young faces gathered around the table where they read the Bible together, while she endeavored to make it plain to them, by a system of "references" which was altogether new to me; no doubt, not always involving a very discriminating study of the different authors and books, but securing a familiar acquaintance with great scriptural revealed truths, in those inimitable words of the English Bible which would come back to the learners in many an after-hour of sorrow and pain and bewilderment, when none but familiar words would be able to penetrate the heart.

Matty's "babies" were, however, my especial delight. Here the aid of art was not despised. There were pictures, not exactly after the old masters, but very brilliant and attractive, of little Samuel, to whom God spoke, and of the boy Joseph, and of Ruth among the corn-fields, and of the child Saviour in the manger, and the good Shepherd carrying the lambs. There were songs about "busy bees," and "early blossoms," and "twinkling stars," and about the manger at Bethlehem, and the "little children" on whom the merciful hands were laid, and the fold where little lambs were safely folded, by which a thousand tender touches of "the Creed of Creeds" were

sung and shone into the hearts of the little ones in tender tones and tints they would no more lose from the memory of the heart, than their mother's voice or their mother's kisses.

Whatever might elsewhere have been dry or over "doctrinal" in the creed, had for the children to be made living and tender and human. With them, at least, there was no danger of the gracious meaning of the Incarnation being forgotten.

But the work of Phœbe, the youngest of my cousins, who, according to her father, had the talent of finding out impracticable people to be reformed, interested me most of all.

With her I went, in the afternoon, to the people who lived, in every sense, "out of the way," and accordingly had to be sought.

The other Sunday school was already an established institution. The children came to it as a matter of course. They were orderly and well-dressed, and naturally, therefore, more disposed to take the teaching as a matter of course. Many of the parents also were in the employment, in one way or another, of the rich people around, and they had thus a hereditary habit of orthodoxy, respectfulness, and respectability. But Phœbe's school was still experimental. It was a room in an alley, in which it was by no means a matter of course for the inhabitants to do anything they ought to do, or not to do anything they ought not to do, and in which very few were disposed as a

matter of habit to be either respectful or respectable.

She could not well have gone there, but for the protection of two of her brothers who accompanied us.

The little persons to be influenced had a most real and independent personality of their own, and the influence over them had therefore to be real and personal.

If they were not interested, they made no polite pretensions of appearing to be. Uneducated, indeed, they were not. In their own narrow line their education had been terribly complete, only unfortunately in the wrong direction.

They knew far more of "life" and the "world," the youngest of them, than my cousin Matty, brought up in the sunny oasis of Clapham. With intelligence preternaturally sharpened, like that of wild animals, in all that concerned themselves, acute, sagacious, cunning, because suspicious of traps, acute as one of those sharp-eyed terriers of their own, which Phœbe had such difficulty in keeping out of the school, in detecting an adversary's weak point,—and trained to look on all human beings, especially well-dressed human beings, as adversaries,—it was not in the direction of a contest of wits that my gentle cousin could cope with them.

Her power was that she had something altogether new, terribly, gloriously new, to bring them. She brought them love, and she brought

them hope. At first, apparently, the whole thing was regarded, in the alley, by the gloomily disposed as an insolent invasion, and by the cheerfully disposed as a practical joke, which they returned by breaking the windows with brickbats. But by degrees, as one by one awoke to the fact that she and her brothers really cared for them, cared that they should grow better, and do better, and be all that is meant among those who are but too obviously "lost," by being "saved," a little band of chivalrous defenders gathered about her, always ready to execute summary Lynch law on any of their companions who presumed to create a disturbance.

That afternoon she had to rescue a victim who was being liberally "punched" for not "holding his jaw."

And when we came to the closing hymn, and the poor fellows shouted out a chorus about "sweet fields," and "living streams," and "Jesus Shepherd of the sheep," these innocent pastoral images altogether overcame me.

To these outcasts to whom the world had denied all the innocent joys of home, Christianity, through a woman's words, was bringing childhood, for the first time. These little ones, hardened from the cradle, were now learning to come as little children, (children for the first time in the new life,) to the Master's feet, to the Saviour's arms, to the King's kingdom. And looking across to Piers, I saw that he also was not a little moved.

These teachings were in the intervals of the church services.

The church services themselves also had in them much that was very new to me.

In the first place there were distinct Christian hymns, altogether an unknown institution in Abbot's Weir church, except at Easter and Christmas, when Reuben Pengelly, with an especially radiant face, used to perform "Hark, the herald angels sing," and "Jesus Christ is risen to-day." We had also occasionally an anthem at Abbot's Weir, with violins and bass-violins, but the whole performance was considered as a specialty of the choir.

It moved me therefore, particularly when the whole congregation, with soft united voices, sang "Jesus, lover of my soul," and—

"O Lord, my best desire fulfil,
And help me to resign
Life, health, and comfort to thy will,
And let that will be mine."

Both hymns were familiar to me; the first from Reuben's singing it to us in the Foundry-yard, from the days when he used to carry Piers about in his arms among the silent machinery on Sunday afternoons; the second, being his favorite Cowper's, my father used to make me very often say to him.

They brought all home before me; Reuben and the sabbatical stillness of the old Foundry-yard, the Stone parlor fire on winter evenings, the arbor at the top of the garden on sunny summer afternoons.

All home, and all heaven; those "kindred points," which so often meet in the heart with overwhelming power, through the early associations of the simplest hymns!

The preaching was quite as new to me as the hymns. In the first place it *was* preaching. Hitherto I had heard nothing but meditations or essays. But this was a proclamation, a message, a speaking direct from heart to heart.

At this distance of time I cannot in the least remember the subject, the words spoken—perhaps they might not bear acute criticism; but I remember as distinctly as if it were yesterday the impression on my own heart.

A message from God, from the Father, from my Father, from the Saviour, to *me*, searching into my heart what I was loving, searching into my life how I was living, making me feel how poor my life was, making me see how rich it ought to be, bringing God before me, bringing me before God.

It moved me much.

I felt too much to speak, when I came out of church. But whatever emotions my dear cousins experienced were not wont to express themselves in silence. The Quaker element was not strong at Cousin Crichton's.

"You enjoyed it, Cousin Bride," said Hatty and Matty simultaneously.

"I was not thinking exactly about enjoying. It searched quite down into one's heart!" I said.

They were satisfied.

"It was very good," said Hatty, "but it was not one of the most striking. It was only the curate, you know."

"You should hear Mr. Cecil, or dear old Mr. Newton, or"—and she went through a long string of celebrities whose names I, and perhaps a fickle world also, have forgotten.

But the comparative anatomy of sermons was a science altogether beyond me.

The Sunday always concluded with a family gathering at supper, when the spirits of all the family seemed to rise with especial elasticity after the day's work. Never was there more innocent glee at Cousin Crichton's; never were more good things said, or things not very brilliant in themselves, made to sparkle more in the glow of that bright home, than at the Sunday suppers.

But that first evening I was too much moved and too tired with all the day's happy excitements to be able to enter into it.

I had a headache, and was suffered to take refuge in little Martha's room.

"I *never* heard a sermon, you know, Cousin Bride," said she, when I said a little to her of what I had felt.

"And I have only heard *one*, Cousin Martha," I replied.

"You have no sermons at Abbot's Weir, dearest Bride?" she exclaimed, evidently looking on us as a case for a new missionary society.

"Not sermons that speak to the heart like that," I said. "Of course Uncle Fyford reads us what is called a sermon. But preaching is something very different."

Preaching seemed to me that evening such a glorious word, and a pulpit such a royal place!

St. Peter and the three thousand who were smitten to the heart at Jerusalem, and St. Paul's "Woe unto me if I preach not"—if he had, indeed, had such a message to give, seemed to me quite comprehensible.

I pitied Martha very much that she could not go to church, or teach in Sunday schools. I suppose she felt it by something in my looks or tones, for she said—

"Yet I do get sermons even here, Cousin Bride, from so many things, from everything, sometimes; from the fire and from the trees waving in the unseen wind, from the stars; if sermons mean messages from God."

"Yes," I said, "you have learned to *listen*." And I told her about Loveday, of whom she always delighted to hear. "But oh, Martha," I said, "it is these plain strong words piercing into the hearts that have *not* learned to listen. Surely if men go on preaching like this, the whole world will turn and listen, and love, before long!"

She hoped it would. She thought it must. The news was so good, the need so great.

And in that glow of hope I went to sleep that night in my princely bedroom, planning and dream-

ing all manner of philanthropic enterprises for Abbot's Weir and the world—day schools, Sunday schools, missionary societies; and feeling not a doubt that the result would be such as Abbot's Weir and the world had never known before.

It was an era of youth and hope, and Clapham was a land of hope. A thousand good works were beginning, and from each of them the founders expected a new era for the world.



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CHAPTER XVIII.

QUON looking at the little packet Madame des Ormes had given me, I was a little alarmed to find that it was intended for no less a personage than our local dignitary, the Countess of Abbot's Weir, whose town house was in Cavendish Square; and that it was to be delivered into no hands but her own. I suppose the Marquise had vague ideas concerning the size of London, and concerning the awfulness of our distinctions of rank.

Cousin Barbara could give me no light on the subject. Cousin Crichton and his family "dwelt among their own people," and had far too much simplicity and self-respect to wish to attain, through any irregular by-paths, religious or secular, to a social level above their own.

I wrote to Claire, therefore, to explain what I could of the difficulty; and we were waiting for the reply, when one morning a coach, a little beyond the usual sober and subdued splendor of Clapham, swept round to the porch.

In a few moments Mrs. Beckford-Glanvil was

announced, and a lady sailed into the room, in whom I recognized at once the form in which Clapham had embodied itself to Amice.

There was a certain overpowering atmosphere of opulence about her, a pomp in the solidity of her tread, a sonorousness about the rustle of her silks; you felt instinctively that she was a representative figure; the wealth of the new wild West seemed represented in her sables, the wealth of the ancient East in her *cachemires* and her aromatic perfumes, the whole "haut commerce" of England in the magnificence of her presence; the whole "petite noblesse" of England in the condensation of her courtesy. She was not only a Beckford, but a Beckford-Glanvil, and not only a Beckford-Glanvil but a Beckford-Glanvil consecrated and further illuminated by Clapham.

She saluted Cousin Barbara with a prolonged pressure of the hand, my cousins with a general gracious acknowledgment, and me with a particular and rather embarrassing inspection.

"Our niece Amice has written to her cousin Cecilia about you, Miss Danescombe," she said. "She is dying to see you; but to-day there was the music-master, the poor Chevalier d'Este, and the French mistress, the Comtesse de Montmorency, and the Italian master, the Marchese Borgia; really, Mrs. Crichton, there are so many refugees it seems a charity to take lessons from, one's children have scarcely leisure for friendship

or society, or charity, or anything. How do you manage such things?"

"I do not manage at all," said Cousin Barbara, which was certainly a correct account of her mode of government. "The girls seem to enjoy everything, and so to find time for everything."

"Certainly, your sons and daughters seem to have time for everything," Mrs. Glanvil resumed. "I hear of them in the Sunday schools, at the District Visiting Society, in the Missionary Collections—everywhere. Quite models! I am always holding them up to my poor dear Cecilia and to my sons. But then we all know, Mrs. Crichton, as dear Mr. V— said so beautifully last Sunday, 'Paul may plant, and Apollos water.' And my poor Arabella, you know, married so very early; and her husband, Sir Frederic, so idolizes her that he will not suffer her to enter a school or a cottage. You know there *is* danger of infection; those poor creatures are not so clean and careful as one could wish. How do you escape?"

"We do not always escape," Cousin Barbara replied. "But my children have good health, thank God, and they take care."

"Ah, some people are hardier than others. My poor darlings are delicate plants, Mrs. Crichton; a little too tenderly nurtured, perhaps; rather too much hot-house plants, I fear."

But she said this in a way which decidedly implied the superiority of the hot-house products to the hardy natives of the open air.

"Our girls are not hot-house plants, certainly," said Cousin Barbara, a little nettled, "and I trust they never will be."

"But talking of hot-houses," continued Mrs. Glanvil, "your own conservatory is really beautiful."

Cousin Barbara rose and led her into it.

For a minute or two she murmured "gorgeous," "superb," "really, quite a novelty," from the conservatory which opened out of the drawing-room, reminded me of the dread of Amice's childhood, of growing up and having to perform show-woman to her grandmother's green-house. "We have five gardeners—the head man a Scotchman," was the conclusion—"but really nothing quite equal to some of these exotics."

While praiseworthy, it was evidently also a little presumptuous in Cousin Crichton, who only kept two gardeners, to reach this eminence.

We returned to politics and philanthropy.

With regard to the slave-trade she confessed that she and Mr. Glanvil did sometimes think Mr. Wilberforce a little unreasonable. Of course every one agreed it was doomed ultimately, but there were important interests not to be neglected; and wise regulation and discouragement leading in the course of years to gradual abolition, was what many sensible men thought the safest and most practicable scheme.

Cousin Barbara quoted Mr. Fox's words that "with regard to the regulation of the slave-trade,

he knew of no such thing as the regulation of robbery and murder."

Mrs. Glanvil said women must leave these practical questions to men, and changed the subject.

The peace with France was beginning to become a general topic.

Mrs. Beckford-Glanvil had much information, on the subject "from private sources," no mere newspaper reports, but things Mr. Beckford-Glanvil had heard at the House of Commons, which she liberally communicated in confidential tones, with a suggestion that perhaps at present "it had better not go further"—opinions of cabinet ministers and various great men and honorable women whom they had met at various dinners; sayings even of a Higher Personage still; what Mr. Pitt intended, and Mr. Fox thought, and what His Majesty had said in confidence.

She was floating away in the midst of this tide of greatness, when the door opened and the butler announced "The Countess of Abbot's Weir," and a tall, majestic looking woman in deep mourning advanced towards Cousin Barbara.

"You will excuse my coming without introduction, Mrs. Crichton," she said. "I had a message from a dear friend of mine, Madame des Ormes, through Miss Danescombe. It is a pleasure to escape from London," she continued, looking at the conservatory, "to have a glimpse of the country, gardens, and flowers."

If she had sought far and wide she could not

have lighted on a compliment sweeter to the heart of Clapham than to call it "country," as I had learned by my cousin Crichton's face when in my first inexperience I had called it "wonderfully pretty for a town."

Cousin Barbara introduced me.

She took my hand, and held it a little, so kindly.

"You have done much," she said softly, "to make my poor friend's hard fate easier. She cannot write enough about you and yours. You must tell me about them all, and that sweet little Claire who loves you so much."

How at home she made me feel, with her gracious easy ways, and with the dear familiar names!

We had all been gradually freezing in the icy circle of that aggressive self-consciousness, which made all the world seem for the moment as if it had forgotten the Copernican system, and were perversely revolving round the house of Beckford-Glanvil, and which set one, (or at least set me,) on a foolish course of inward self-assertion, enumerating my own claims to consideration, and recalling all the distinguished people I had known or might have known; crystallizing us generally into separate spikes and blocks of ice.

And now all at once, as if with the touch of a sunbeam, we recovered and began to flow together. It was certainly not merely the fact of the rank of the countess, (although doubtless it is one of the privileges of mountains to allay the pretensions

of the little hills,) it was that she was "at leisure from herself," and simply by virtue of her sweet graciousness set us free from the spell under which we had been growing rigid. In a few minutes I found myself talking to her about Madame des Ormes and Claire, with that certainty of her *really caring* which makes intercourse easy and natural.

I rose to fetch the little packet. Mrs. Beckford-Glanvil also rose, said again how her Cecilia was longing to see her cousin's friend, and hoped I would fix a day to spend with her, and that my cousins would accompany me.

The prospect was appalling, but Cousin Barbara having rescued me by saying we would soon do ourselves the pleasure of returning Mrs. Beckford-Glanvil's call, I was set free to execute my commission.

When I returned the countess was quietly talking to Cousin Barbara on the universal topic of the peace. But her information was by no means so assured as that of Mrs. Beckford-Glanvil. The earl, she said frankly, had never liked the war, and she had always thought it one of the finest things Mr. Wilberforce had ever done to stand out for peace against his political friends.

"It is so much easier," she said, "to differ from the whole world than from one's own party."

But she risked no other name by quoting it in support of any opinion; and of the king, when there happened to be occasion to mention his name, she spoke with the far-off loyalty of an ordinary

subject who had never seen his Majesty nearer than in a procession.

"But there is one gentleman at Clapham," she said, "to whom I had once the honor of being introduced, and whose house I should greatly like to see. No doubt you can tell me. Mr. Granville Sharpe. He has always seemed to me like one of the old knights before the ideal of chivalry was spoilt. The grandson of an archbishop and brother of an archdeacon, contentedly serving his apprenticeship to a mercer; and then, alone, turning the whole law of England, corrupted by false precedent, back to its true, older precedents of freedom. Then afterwards, (which seems to me as noble as anything,) giving up his appointment in the Treasury and his income, rather than be involved in sending out ammunition for what he considered the unjust and unbrotherly war against America. Content to be alone against the world, for truth and justice, such men end in bringing the world round. I think there was never a nobler English gentleman."

My heart beat quick, and I felt my face glowing crimson at the praises of my hero, with the homage of my cousins to whom I had not been quite satisfied.

Cousin Barbara smiled, and said very kindly to me,—

"Bride, you know Mr. Granville Sharpe's house, if any one does."

"Will you get into the carriage and show me?"

the countess said ; "and will your cousin come with us ? And will you let me drive them home with me, Mrs. Crichton, that we may have a long talk over our common friends and our common heroes ? If you can, I should like it so much ; the earl is away, and it will cheer my solitary evening ; and I promise to send them back safely in the evening."

It was impossible to refuse, and Hatty and I spent a most happy day at Cavendish Square seeing all kinds of interesting ancestral portraits, and relics, and autographs, and feeling as if we were personally drinking draughts of delight at the very sources of English history.

Simple and natural her life seemed, as ours at Abbot's Weir, or my cousins' at Clapham, in the great world of London, which was her native place, or among their tenants in the country whom she loved to help ; its deep places, simply such as mine or Loveday's, or Reuben Pengelly's. Into these depths she gave me one glimpse, which drew my heart to her. Taking me into her dressing-room, she drew back a veil from the portrait of a lovely child about the age of Claire.

"Last year she was with us," she said. "Tell Claire. They used to play together in old days in France."

And on taking leave she kissed me, and said she must see me again at Abbot's Weir.

The visit to Mrs. Beckford-Glanvil could not be evaded, but the good nature of my cousins,

great as it was, could not stretch so far as to accompany me. All they would concede was to attend a drawing-room missionary meeting in the evening, at which several of the Clapham lions were to be present, and a "native" of some oriental country in native costume.

Cecilia's longing to see me was not very apparent; but it was the less disappointing because she was not demonstrative on any subject. A kind of mental limpness seemed to pervade her, which was perhaps what her mother meant by her being a hot-house plant.

In Mrs. Glanvil's presence she said little. Her mother spoke for her. She was sure her dear Cecilia felt charmed with this, and interested in that; and Cecilia did not take the trouble to dissent. Mrs. Glanvil's own interest seemed concentrated on Madame des Ormes.

"It is curious," she said, "my mother-in-law did not mention her. Quite a person of distinction apparently. But, then, to be sure, there are so many foreign persons of distinction staying at this moment in England, that with all the princes, and marquises, and countesses, and chevaliers who have to be helped, one is quite bewildered with titles. Mr. Beckford-Glanvil often has to warn me that, after all, charity begins at home."

I pitied the poor patronized princes and marquises from my heart.

"But," I said, a little indignantly, "Madame des Ormes is not in want of charity. She lives at

Abbot's Weir because she likes to be quiet, and (she kindly says) because she likes us. That is all."

"Of course, Miss Danescombe, of course. No one imagines a Marquise would settle in Abbot's Weir from choice. I suppose the Countess of Abbot's Weir knew them in better days?"

After a time Cecilia took me into her boudoir. When I was alone with her she came out in a new light.

To my cousin Crichtons the presence of their parents seemed a free atmosphere in which all their thoughts and hearts expanded; to Cecilia the absence of her mother seemed a liberation. She was surprised that I liked Clapham. It seemed to her and her brothers the dullest place in the world. She supposed it was because I came out of a deeper depth of dulness at Abbot's Weir.

She seemed to me terribly tepid and old. She admired nothing: she hoped in nothing. She was "désillusionnée" at nineteen. The slaves she considered only less wearisome than the anti-slavery people. She could not at all comprehend the fuss made about them. "If they were emancipated, they were still black and still poor, and how was the world to be made an agreeable place for blacks and poor people?"

The only thing she warmed into energy about was her detestation of missionary meetings. Her sister was married and never meant to attend another in her life. "All kinds of people brought

into your drawing-room," she observed, with disgust, "that at another time would not come beyond the servants' hall. And my brothers say the whole thing is such an imposition. Converts bought at so much a head to come here and be shown like the zoölogical animals, and all the ladies and plaintiffs trying who can have the newest or most curious. But I suppose every one must have amusements; we have ours, and mamma has hers. I don't think anything is very amusing; but religious amusements are certainly the dullest of all."

Piers and I had often found amusements, or trying to be amused, tiresome; and I suppose if religion could be brought to that level she might be right.

She depressed me dreadfully.

It was the first example I had encountered of that reaction from unreal enthusiasm to a cynical contempt, or a languid "nil admirari" which besets the second generation of religious parties, as far as they are merely parties; the Nemesis of all unreal religious profession.

Mr. Beckford-Glanvil appeared just before the late dinner at five o'clock. He was interesting to me for the sake of Abbot's Weir and Amice, as the future proprietor of Court. But Mrs. Glanvil continued to dominate the conversation. He was polite but impenetrable, and seemed to me rather to endure his wife's social amusements than to enjoy them. But this is a peculiarity not limited to religious families.

At dinner there was general discourse about Abbot's Weir, the peace with France, and various political prospects, concerning which Mr. Glanvil was far more reticent and less informed than his wife. After dinner the hostess employed herself in impressing me with the importance of the expected guests, and especially expatiated concerning Mr. Wilberforce; how he "maintained religion in the eye of the world by having a large house, giving hospitable entertainments, and indulging himself in those congruities to his taste and fortune which became the English gentleman and the Christian."

A chill fear crept over me that I should find the lions of Clapham whom I was to behold that evening, and even Mr. Wilberforce himself, removed far from me into that world of clothes, congruities, proprieties, and conventionalities in which the "Me" and the "Not me" were so inextricably confounded, and in which my "Me" always became so terribly isolated.

Vain and foolish fears.

That sparkling wit, lighted up from that tender and benevolent heart, that social genial nature which in all society drew its deepest glow from the Presence it never quitted, that natural, courteous, considerate, easy, happy English gentleman, that truly loving, generous-hearted Christian man had not been in the room five minutes before the icy spell of self-importance and self-consciousness, of cynicism and "nil admirari" melted away,

unconsciously, and entirely in that genial presence. Every one seemed to become real and natural; their best, because their true selves. Everything in God's creation seemed worth caring for. Every creature in His redeemed world seemed worth loving and serving.

Before the evening ended I was quite reconciled to Clapham, and quite inspired with its devotion to its chieftain.



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CHAPTER XIX.



OUR cousins would not hear of our return. As our visit was prolonged, I began to have pathetic letters from Abbot's Weir.

Amice wrote,—

“ You seem fairly launched into the millennium, for you, that is, the reign of righteousness and peace; and for poor forsaken me, in the meantime the “ thousand years,” of pining, without you. It seems just that since you left !

“ Granny is more deaf in her discriminating way than ever, and more disposed to be didactic to me. She suspects that I have a turn for negroes and philanthropy, and accordingly finds and makes countless opportunities for depreciating philanthropists and negroes. And I am horribly torn between the conflicting duties of ‘ submitting myself to my governors’ and being ‘ true in all my dealings ;’ between the emotions of indignation against what she says, and a reverent tenderness for her. For she loves me more from year to year, I know ; and she would feel my crossing her will like a great blow from the hand she loves best in

the world; her will, her heart, and her opinions being so inextricably entangled, that nothing would ever persuade her my differing from her opinions was anything but a heartless, wilful revolt against her love and authority. And moreover I cannot help seeing, brave and resolute as she is, and scornfully rejecting help as ever, that she grows weaker as I grow stronger, so that a blow from me now would be like a man striking his aged mother. It is all terribly entangled. Come back, my single-hearted Bride, and walk quietly on through all these tangles, in your wonted way, scattering nets of ropes like cobwebs by merely going straight-forward, without an idea of what good you have done, of what perplexities you have made, or what perplexities you have unmade!

"Alas for me! I cannot help seeing and feeling all round, feeling every one's excuses and difficulties so strongly that I seem unable not only to go boldly forward, but to go on at all, and can only sit still, and let the net coil and knot itself about me tighter and tighter.

"Oh for the days of Moses, or of St. Paul, or of the Crusaders! And yet I suppose Moses had some conflict of doubts as to abandoning Pharaoh's daughter; and perhaps St. Paul as to Gamaliel; and perhaps even my crusading ancestor as to the wife, and babes, and "villeins," he left at home.

"But I am trying to *listen*, Bride, as our Love-day says, and sometimes I think when the call

comes I could count it all joy to follow, anywhere, in any way.

"But can it have come while I was asleep?"

And Claire wrote:—

"I long for you always. Is London, then, after all, as strong in its attractions as our poor Paris of the old days? Or are you so strong in your attractions that London will not yield you back to us? Yes, that is it. The Countess writes to my mother in ecstasies about you. You are a sweet violet, a fresh breath from the moors, a demoiselle de la haute noblesse by nature,—a creature whose natural naturalness no Court could spoil. All this she says or means, when her words are translated.

"As if we needed to be told all that! I call it an impertinence to bestow all these beautiful phrases on us, as if they were anything new to us.

"Besides I am not so sure about the manners of the noblesse. There are bourgeois among the haute noblesse, and there are Bayards among the bourgeoisie. They may create equality of possessions in our poor France if they can; but equality of persons never!

"And here are your violets and primroses sighing and growing pale for you! while Reuben waits when he brings me your letters, like your Newfoundland dog in his company manners trying not to seem solicitous for a bone. Mr. Danescombe grows hypocritical, and endeavors to persuade us and himself that he is delighted you are enjoying yourselves; and Miss Loveday grows monastical,

and lectures me on the inordinate love of the creature, until I have to contradict her from her own Bible, which says so much about loving fervently, and never a word that I can see about not loving.

"Piers, no doubt, is well occupied, and forgets us all. That is but natural, when one has so many marvellous meetings, excellent and wise men, charming cousins, and steam-engines, to care about.

"But meantime, we, your natural enemies, are possessing your land. And Mr. Danescombe said the other day, I recited some of Cowper's poetry like you! Take care, *ma chérie*, when hearts are left too long empty, they will find themselves at any poor cup."

And Loveday wrote:—

"My heart is glad for you. You are learning by sight, on the Pestalozzian system, the best way. Perhaps, after all, nevertheless, one does not lose everything by being a little way off. At Corinth, you know, they were not quite clear which was the greater, Paul the Apostle, or Apollos."

And my stepmother:—

"I am gratified to find you are making wise use of such a golden opportunity. I am gratified also from your excellent cousins' letters to find they make such amiable allowance for any little rusticities your dear father's rather unrestrained ideas of liberty might have produced."

And my father:—

"My children, your cousins are all kindness.

I cannot wonder that they delight to have you, as much as my judgment tells me I ought. And I am sure you ought to stay on, although I cannot wish it as I should, and as they so kindly seem to do. We grow miserly over the years, as there are fewer in the heap before us. But I think your home will be none the less dear to you for all the luxuries of your cousins'. You have a love for helping to bear other people's burdens, my children, inherited from one better than I am. And God knows, He and you and every one have made the burdens of life light to me.

"Your letters glow, as if they came out of some tropical land. You are among those who are helping to lift off many burdens from mankind. And I trust you may bring us back some good lessons. We in Abbot's Weir have scarcely done all we might."

That letter of my father's made me passionately long to return, not from its words so much as for the absence of any of the dry little sayings which were natural to him, when no weight was on him. And I could not bear the humility. Clapham was *not* better than he was.

However, engagements had been made for us until June; and through May, at all events, we must stay.

Moreover, at the period when that letter arrived, I was a little indignant with Clapham on more grounds than one. I had expressed a wish to see the chapel in which John Wesley had preached.

Cousin Crichton had replied by some rather disparaging remarks about the Methodists,—excellent people, he admitted, in their way, in their day, and in their place, but evidently not exactly in his way, or in his day, or at Clapham. Also, one of my cousins (it was dear good Phœbe the reformer) had said to me something that offended me about Piers. I cannot remember the words. They were, I know, very circumspect and very kind; but they implied that Piers was not up to the Clapham standard of religious experience. "He made so little response, one could not be sure whether he cared!"

Piers!—who would have thrown himself into the water to rescue any one, while others were wringing their hands on the shore! Piers, who had in old days denied himself what he most cared about for the slaves, or any one in trouble, while I only shed tears—easy, idle tears! I was very indignant, and as that was the first time I had appeared in that character at Clapham, my cousins were proportionately astonished.

I said they were as bad as the people who would not tolerate any one if he lisped, or said *sh* instead of *s*; that they would not have recognized St. Andrew, or Nathanael, or any of the dear quiet saints, who would not protest and talk;—that they would have believed in Apolles more than in St. Paul. I don't know what vehement things I did not say, blending in my defence Piers and the Methodists.

I said there was the Age of the Heroes who fought the dragons and founded the cities, and the

Age of the settled, comfortable citizens, who lived in the cities and kept festivals over the skeletons of the slain dragons; that King David had his "first three," and then his thirties, and his thousands; that Clapham and its citizens and its festivals were excellent, but where would Clapham have been, unless the Wesleys and Whitefield had faced the mobs of heathen miners and colliers, led on sometimes by worse than heathen rich people, had drawn the colliers, out of their dens and holes, and conquered them for Christ—risking life over and over again, "being destitute, afflicted, tormented;" hunted out of the church they loved—for too much love to her lost children; hunted down by lost multitudes for determining to save them from their sins; avenging themselves on the church by bringing back to her countless of her lost, to inspire her with new life,—avenging themselves on the savage mob by bringing back thousands of them to God. I said it was not true that the Wesleys were separatists. They had been hunted out for beginning the very work the Church was now waking up to share. England had driven the loyal colouists in America into becoming a nation, and the Church of England had driven the loyal and orthodox Methodists into becoming a sect. And things done were not to be undone. Nations were not so easily to be caressed or chastised back into being colonies.

I said it was excellent to preach good things to reverent hearers in orderly pulpits, and to con-

tend in great meetings against great wrongs; but that it was something more to go alone after one lost sheep into perilous wildernesses, and to face alone for Christ's love a crowd of angry men ready to stone you.

I said that the men and women who welcomed shipwrecked men to the shore, and fed and clothed and attended them—were dear and good and Christian; but that the *one man* who swam through the surf with the rope to the wreck was *more*, and his work such as the shipwrecked men and those who helped them should never forget.

I said, finally, that Piers was better ten thousand times than I was, who was always imposing on people just because I had a miserable, un-English way of saying out all I felt, while he never could say a tithe of what he felt, and so *did* it. I said I did think there might be too much religious talk, and I was sure there might be too much religious judging; and that there were good people in the world at other places besides Clapham, and there had been in other ages before 1801, and in other churches besides our own. Indeed I hazarded the daring remark that in some ways I thought Abbot's Weir a more roomy state of existence than Clapham, with glimpses into a wider world and a longer past.

And I said I did sometimes wish that every one at Clapham was not so terribly rich; and that if the apostles, even, had had to live among them, I thought after a little while it must have been

hard for them not to have felt it a sin of omission not to have some thousands a year.

Cousin Phœbe was evidently a little tempted to admit me among her company of impracticable people to be reformed. She said very good-humoredly, with a funny little buttoning of her lips, "that, at all events, there was no danger of mistaking me for one of the silent saints."

But they had all the sunniest and sweetest tempers. Cousin Harriet at once adopted me as one of her "uncomfortable people to comfort;" and Cousin Matilda, the most open to new convictions and new admirations of any of them, generously conceded that she did think, from my descriptions, Abbot's Weir must have some of the best people possible in it.

And afterwards, dear little Martha having heard of the little passage of arms, put her thin arms round me and said,—

"I like you for being in a little fury about your brother, Cousin Bride; for I think there never was any one, any boy, I mean, so kind and helpful and gentle. He saw why it was my head was a little uncomfortable on this couch, and he made me that wooden support, you know to keep up the pillows. I do wish he could have been a doctor! He says so little and does so quietly and exactly the right thing. It is such a rest! He wishes it too; at least, he did wish it so much. But of course you know."

I did know. But she seemed to know more.

The little sufferer had attracted out of him the secret he so rarely spoke of, of the studies and ambitions he had freely relinquished without ever letting my father know he had sacrificed anything—to be able to help him in his business, and that Francis might go to the University.

But Piers was the most trying of all. For when I told him of these fears of Phœbe's (being anxious moreover to draw out of a little cloud of reserve and gravity which I had observed on him lately), he only said—"Perhaps she is more than half right, Bride. I am sure I am not what I want to be ; and *will* be, I trust," he added, softly.

This humility of Piers, and now of my father's in this letter, were too provoking ; most especially so, because they really meant it.

Humility was not precisely the characteristic of my cousin Crichtons, or of Clapham, as I saw it, except of dear Cousin Barbara, who was not "gifted" in any way, she said, and greatly marvelled at and delighted in the powers of utterance of her daughters. In secret, no doubt, they thought humbly of themselves ; but then I did not see them in secret ; the diaries which, no doubt they all kept, not being yet published. But in public the whole active, benevolent, flourishing community admired each other too sincerely and too demonstratively not to see reflected in themselves some of the glow they shed on others. They did not blow trumpets before themselves, but they did liberally serenade each other.

And I considered that Piers and my father had been over-impressed by those triumphant clarions.

However it was only when summoned by such self-depreciation or such suspicions, to little counter trumpeting of my own, that I lost the joyous sense of the stir and the victory around me, and left for a minute that Gulf Stream of love and life which swept me on in its full warm tides, and swept summer to so many shores.





CHAPTER XX.

CLAIRE wrote of the shady violet-banks and primroses in the dear old fields and lanes around Abbot's Weir, and of the carpets of blue hyacinths in the woods by the river.

At Clapham, too, it was May; and what May meant at Clapham was indeed as unknown to Abbot's Weir as the sudden rush of floral life in the springs of Lapland.

Externally, however contemptuously Amice might speak of its attractions, Clapham had its own abundant share of the glories of spring. Ranges of real country-fields, and of useful farm buildings, (picturesque, if picturesque at all, by necessity or accident, not by self-conscious design,) lay between the Common and London.

Every garden overflowed with treasures of blossom into the roads, laburnums, "dropping wells of fire," thorns, pink and white, lilacs, and, in the regions around, avenues of horse-chestnut, like processions awaiting some joyous bridal,—trees unknown to Abbot's Weir, embosomed in its ancient

oak-woods. And in sunny nooks, under those walled paradises, beds of sweet violets, crocuses, clusters of anemones, embracing almost the whole chord of prismatic color, all blending with each other in rich brocades and "shots" of interwoven tints, before the "ribbon" style of art had been invented. And harmonizing all, the delicious green of well-kept lawns, penetrating in little creeks and bays under the shadow of the groves and shrubberies.

Little paradises walled in from the wilderness, where certainly no thorns and briars, and apparently no serpent could enter; between these paradises incessant interchanges of kindness and friendly intercourse; and from these paradises, full of "all that was pleasant to the eye or good for food," incessant ministrations of mercy towards the wilderness which, unhappily, still existed outside, through ministering men and women who frankly recognized each other as little less than angelic; rivers of beneficence, flowing forth East and West and North and South, and "glad tidings of great joy," sincerely dearer to many of the happy dwellers than any treasures besides, sounding forth far and wide from that oasis of exceptional bliss.

As to me, I felt often, during that May, altogether lapped in paradise, body, soul, and spirit.

Never can I forget the effect of those May meetings since become the butts of so many witticisms, on me.

Exeter Hall was not built until thirty years

afterwards, but the human materials of Exeter Hall were there.

It was the meeting of the London Missionary Society to which I was first taken.

We met in Freemasons' Hall.

The Church Missionary Society had been established three years before, in 1798. The Bible Society, to meet a dearth of the Scriptures, to which all existing means of supply were entirely inadequate, was instituted two years later (1803).

The Baptist Missions had been commenced, with their first subscriptions of £13 2s. 6d., and their *one man ready for any sacrifice*, William Carey, in 1786.

Earliest of all in this new spring-tide, many years before, in 1731, the Moravian Brethren had sent out their first missionaries, and had sent them, according to their noble custom, to the most despised and rejected of all—the slaves in the West Indies.

The London Missionary Society had been in existence five years, called into being by the dying request of Lady Huntingdon. It was intended to embrace all sections of the Christian Church. This original purpose has been, in a great measure, frustrated, partly perhaps by the narrowness of human prejudice, but chiefly, I think, by the largeness of Divine purpose, working out that richer and deeper unity which is to be attained, not by a neutralizing mixture of all the elements in a mild and ineffective compound, but by a free development of all in the fulness of life. It was found impossible for the

various Christian societies to work together, when the proclamation of the gospel of the common Christianity had drawn together communities of converts. But in those days the various societies not having increased to the dimensions they afterwards reached, there was leisure and good-will for each to sympathize with all.

Accordingly my Cousin Crichton, although a firm and orderly churchman, took us all to the London Missionary Meeting.

Those who think Christian missions have effected nothing, would do well to consider the state of the world outside Christendom at the commencement of this century.

At that time all the societies were groping their way in the thick darkness.

In India, the British merchants were still strenuously opposing the disturbing of the natives, and of their own commerce, by the introduction of Christianity. A year before, barred out by England from all her stations, Carey had landed at the Danish settlement at Serampore.

When the glories of nations are seen to be not miles of territory, but noble deeds and men, a radiant halo will surely be recognized around the brows of the brave little nation which was the first in Protestant Christendom to awake to the fact that the religion of Christ is meant for all men, and to open her colonies in the East and West Indies, to the proclamation of His kingdom.

Except a few scattered converts of Schwarz, there was not a native Protestant church in India.

The words of Carey, on his outward voyage, "that Africa, for missionary work, was not far from England, and Madagascar very little farther," seemed to us then a wild visionary speculation.

There was not a single Christian in the Pacific Islands, or in Madagascar, scarcely in Africa; not one in connection with the reformed churches in China or Japan. It was not until nearly three centuries after the Reformation era, that the Protestant churches awoke nationally, or collectively, to the fact of the existence of an outside world to be evangelized.

And now at length, at the beginning of the century, England, "mistress of the seas," and mother of almost all the European colonies that live, had waked up to her great work of evangelization.

At that time all the societies were groping their way in the dark; having yet to investigate the distinctions of heathenism, ranging from savage fetish worship to religious with systems more subtle than any European philosophies, and with sacred books older than the New Testament; and therefore having yet to invent the various weapons needed to meet these various antagonists.

All the battle-fields had to be reconnoitred; all the weapons had to be forged.

The Bible had to be translated into almost every language of the heathen world. Carey alone translated the whole, or portions of it, into thirty of the

dialects of India. For this purpose the armory of the Bible Society was gradually extended.

In many cases the written language had to be created. Between the translation of the Bible into Gothic by Ulphilas in the fourth century, and the work of the Bible Society in the nineteenth, not a translation of the Scriptures had been made for the instruction and conversion of races outside Christendom.

It is true that only three centuries since the third—namely the tenth, eleventh, and fifteenth—are unmarked by fresh translations; but these were made for people already within the pale of Christendom.

Nearly three hundred years ago Luther's "German Bible for the German Folk" had begun to create a German people and a German language; but now first the Christian Church arose to place the Testament of her Lord in the hands of the whole race He came to redeem and to rule.

In India the missionaries found the Sacred Books of the Buddhist and of Mahomet, but not that of Christ. In Africa and the islands of the Pacific they found not only no Bible, but no grammar, no alphabet, no written language. In other regions of the East they found indeed translations of the Christian Scriptures, but in ancient forms of speech which had died out of the comprehension of the people for more than a thousand years.

Every missionary in those days went on a voyage of discovery. What missionary meetings and

reports were in those days it is difficult almost to recall in these. The centuries of slumber were over—

“ And all the long pent stream of life
Dashed downward in a cataract.”

All this was embodied to me, and to hundreds besides me, in that unpicturesque assembly in Freemasons' hall.

Do we not, indeed, often aim too low, in our aesthetics and symbolisms?

Is not sculpture higher than architecture? Is not a statue of Phidias, a Venus of Milo, more than the temple which may enshrine it?

What do we mean by a shrine, but the sacred casket which the temple, as an outer case, enshrines? What do we mean by a shrine, unless the jewel is more precious than the casket?

And through the religion which centres in the Incarnation, the truth that “the true Shechinah is man,” receives a new force which is simply infinite. More precious, capable of a diviner beauty than the most glorious cathedral, is the simplest, the lowest, the most lost, of the crowd of human beings gathered in it.

To the eyes which see things as they are, as the serene souls illumined with the “angelical smile” in Dante's “Paradiso,” a multitude of men and women gathered from solitary patient labors in obscure corners to rejoice together and help towards the growth of the Kingdom through the manifestations of the King, must surely require no acces-

sories of place or ceremonial to make as fair a picture as earth can show. The time may come when the highest art will be seen to be with those for whom goodness and truth are indissoluble from beauty, because they are the eternal beauty.

To me, in those youthful days, when the hymn of glory to Christ was sung in unison, it seemed like nothing so much as that "voice of a great multitude, and of many waters, and of mighty thunders," heard of old in heaven.

I knew some of the quiet fountains from which those many waters flowed, the little clouds, "no bigger than a man's hand," in which the electric force was gathered, which burst forth in that thunder of thanksgiving. I knew not only the Claphams, but the Abbot's Weirs.

This crowd had not been formed, did not live as a crowd. It was gathered, the best part of it, one by one, from quiet hidden places scattered through the land, where the little band, and the solitary worker, were pulling "against the stream" of their own little district. It had been gathered, one by one, as I believed, in quiet hidden hours, when each human spirit there had been brought into solitary communion with the Divine Spirit.

For a moment those quiet waters had come forth from the unseen in this visible, audible tide of praise; and soon they would pass again into the unseen, visible and audible only to Him who alone and who always sees the Church as One,

because He sees every individual which makes that great unity.

Fastidious criticism may pull its rhythm and symbolism to pieces; but to me the

“Crown Him, crown Him, crown Him Lord of all!”

sung by the thousand earnest voices, was like a great coronation anthem.

I seem visibly, audibly, as well as inwardly—“body, soul, and spirit”—translated into some glorious cathedral, into the temple which all cathedrals symbolize, “the pattern showed in the Mount of God.”

I thought, I felt—all Clapham, all “evangelical” England felt—that the whole Church was entering on a new era, a new spring-tide, a new outpouring from the pure well of life, a new enkindling of the divine fires.

Were we altogether wrong? Was there nothing of Pentecost in the fire which has cleansed the actual literal hell of our prisons, consumed the devilish iniquity of slavery out of nation after nation, enkindled the light of the love of Christ in countless dark places which knew not a ray of it, in India, China, Africa, and the islands of the sea, given the Bible in nearly eighty new tongues to those who speak them?

Has there arisen before or afterwards, since apostolic days, a movement which has accomplished more in the divine literature written on “the tables

of the heart," which as we believe, shall never be superseded and become obsolete? or in that Church Architecture which no fires of Advent judgment shall dissolve?



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CHAPTER XXI.

IT was on the last day of May; the day which at Abbot's Weir troops of children still celebrated by singing old songs from door to door, carrying garlands festooned with strings of eggs. Every incident of that day is as clear to my memory as a proof-engraving, bitten in by the event of its close.

I was sitting by the open window in Cousin Crichton's drawing-room, all kinds of sweet English fragrances wafted in from the garden, and all kinds of delicate aromatic exotic perfumes breathing out of the conservatory.

Mr. Twistleton, the curate, had just come in, and was hovering about in an indefinite way. At length he approached the window, and looking out on the sunny lawn, turned to me and exclaimed, in a kind of mild rapture,—

“Ah, Miss Danescombe, *‘all this, and heaven afterwards!’*”

The last words were a quotation from a tract about a thankful old woman.

“Oh, please not, Mr. Twistleton!” I said. “It

was just the old woman's '*all this*' being her poor bare old solitary room, that made it so beautiful in her to say it. Please not to talk of our '*all this*;' it makes me so afraid heaven might be like it."

"My dear Miss Danescombe," he replied, surprised, apparently, at the vehemence of my tone, "surely such foretastes of Paradise are given to prepare us for the reality."

"Oh, I trust not," I said, "I think not, I am sure not. God will never let heaven be just a little bit of exclusive bliss, without even as much power of spreading it as we have here. It is so unlike Himself."

He looked perplexed at my ideas, and a little hurt, at my fervor. I believe he thought I was getting into dangerous speculations, and had rather a dangerous temper, and in a short time, after a few indifferent observations, he left. My cousin always insisted I had unconsciously checked a declaration. But I never thought so. And if I had, it was very fortunate for us both, inasmuch as he married very wisely and well a month or two afterwards.

All day my cousins and I were busy about some of their countless bountiful and considerate kindnesses; cutting and binding up flowers to take to invalids, hunting out truant Sunday-school children, carrying little dainties and tracts to the sick poor. It was one of Cousin Barbara's plans always to connect body and soul in her distributions, espe

cially because tracts, not being expensive luxuries, she could not bear that her pensioners should think she commuted costly temporal help for cheap religious benefactions. Political economy did not trouble her any more than it did St. Francis. How to sustain without weakening is a problem at no time easy to solve, with which she did not perplex herself at all.

My cousin Harriet and I were coming in at the garden-gate after our last expedition, when we met Piers. He was walking with a languor quite unlike himself. Something in his face smote through me like a sword. He looked stricken.

"Where have you been?" I said.

"Through some of the jails with John," he said.

"They were very terrible?" I said.

"Too terrible to speak of, sister," he said.

There was something in his voice, and in his going back to that old name of our childhood, which touched me unaccountably.

"You are ill, Piers," I said, clinging to his arm. It felt no support. He needed support from me. He let me go silently up with him to his room, and then he lay down on the bed and closed his eyes.

And so that terrible time began; unannounced, unforeseen, as the terrible things do come to us in life, whether they creep on us with footsteps slow and noiseless as those of Time, or crash on us in the earthquake and the whirlwind.

The earth opening her mouth in the midst of

the tents where the family meal is preparing and the little children are at play !

Down into the dreadful chasm we went, Piers and I ; the valley of the shadow of death, so close always to us all ; he lying on the bed of fever, I watching beside him hour by hour and day by day, watching every look and movement, yet separated from him all the while farther than by continents.

Week followed week, unnoticed, in that land where Time was no more.

Delirium came ; and the secrets of that brave tender heart were unveiled.

My father joined us ; and we watched together, yet still apart from each other as from Piers, afraid to murmur our fears, unwilling to enfeeble the little gossamer thread of hope to which we clung by trusting it to words.

* * * * *

We watched together, yet alone, in that land of chaos and thick darkness, where all the billows and waves go over us, yet we live, if it can be called living to lie, breathing, but stunned and blinded ; that land of desolation where every one is alone, where prayer becomes nothing but a cry without words, a lifting up of the soul like the eyes blinded with tears, not to *see* but to *appeal*, or at best (if such faith is given), a helpless, speechless falling on the heart of the Father, and resting for a sustaining moment there.

* * * * *

And at last we touched the ground at the bottom of that awful chasm, and found that this time it was not to be unfathomable; that this time the earth was not to close over him visibly, and over us in soul.

At last, one morning, after a quiet sleep, he said in a quiet, feeble, natural voice—

“Sister, I have been very ill. I must have given a great deal of trouble.”

Then I called my father, who was trying to sleep in the next room; and with quiet voices, as if it was all a matter of course, but with hearts beating with a tumult of joy, we spoke to him—to him—yes, to himself, once more, and he answered. The dreadful chasm cleaving us into separate existence was gone.

We were one once more; we lived and our lives flowed together; and oh, how much closer, how much deeper, how much fuller, for all we had gone through apart!

I have gone down into that gulf of terror more than once since then.

I have crept up out of it alone to the poor common earth, while the one I watched has risen out of it, unseen, into the higher, fuller life awaiting us beyond.

I have learned slowly, slowly, and with what anguish, that there is “a better deliverance” from sickness than recovering to this fettered life.

I have learned to believe, and sometimes to feel,

that the joy of that restoration to health—overwhelming, intense as it was—is but a faint picture of the joy of the rising to live the immortal life, over which death has no dominion. But to this day that joy of welcoming my brother back to us, of seeing him rise step by step to life and health, and rise enriched with treasures from the depths into which he had decended, remains to me the purest type of that other joy “incorruptible and undefiled, and that fadeth not away,” which now I embrace by faith for my beloved, and hope ere long with them to know.

How tender they all were, those cousins of ours, the servants of the house, every one, in their sympathy in our joy! How near they seemed, they who, during that time when we were thus watching in the darkness, had seemed as far off as creatures in another planet; how ungrateful I felt I must have been for all their help; how grateful I felt now!

Cousin Barbara had some new surprise every day from those countless, hospitable luxuries of hers which she persisted in ascetically calling “little comforts;” flowers, dainties, cushions, easy chairs, the easiest of carriages.

I could not help feeling that the rather oppressive necessity, or rather “duty” of being rich, which had occasionally weighed on me at Clapham, had its very pleasant side when one had to be convalescent in such a Castle Bountiful as Cousin Crichton’s.

Yet I could never forget that there were depths into which no Castle Bountiful could pour one drop

of consolation. I could never forget that in all that terrible time the only human comfort that had reached me was from the one chamber of suffering in that beautiful, bountiful home; that the only tears I had been able to shed were one night when, at the very darkest of all, I had crept into little Martha's room, and she had clasped her poor thin arms round me and sobbed—

“Cousin Bride, I do love him so dearly! But oh, indeed, God loves him better! ‘*Lord, he whom Thou lovest is sick.*’ Poor dear cousin Bride!”





CHAPTER XXII.

ONE day we were driving together, Piers and I, in Cousin Crichton's carriage alone through the green lanes and over the commons which then stretched beyond Clapham, alone in that delightful uninterrupted solitude one feels in a carriage, where no one can get at one, and when one has no duties to any one to summon one away.

It was one of our first drives.

"Bride," Piers said to me suddenly, "I was delirious, was I not?"

I had to admit it.

"Did I say anything?"

"You thought you were a doctor, sometimes," I said, "and seemed very pleased."

"I hope father was not there," he said.

"Oh, you dear blind boy!" I said, "hiding your wise ostrich head in the sands. Do you think we do not know what you gave up to help us all? And do you think we do not love to know it? Or that you will make us forget?"

"Was that all?" he said.

There were two other seals broken.

"Must he know?"

"He must know."

Now, which seal should I break first? I turned away my head.

"You spoke a little—a great deal—of Claire," I said.

"Was any one there!" he asked, very earnestly.

"No one but me," I said; "and I always knew."

"That will do," he said.

And then there was rather a long pause.

"Nothing else?" he said at last, with some relief.

"Yes, something else, brother," I said—

"scarcely anything continually, *but* that one thing."

He looked inquiring.

I could scarcely speak of it yet. I scarcely knew if he was strong enough to bear it. Such anguish had been in his bewildered eyes, and in his clear, strong, unnatural tones when he spoke of this. At last I resolved to say—

"It was *sin*, brother. You kept saying your life had been lost, lost. You kept asking if there was forgiveness for you; for *you*! You kept on telling me to be ready; ready—as you were not. Oh, do not ask me to speak of it! while all our agony was that you *were* ready, ready to leave us and go away among the redeemed and holy, and be blessed forever, and see God, and we see you no more on earth forever! Do not ask me. I cannot speak of that."

"I was *not* ready, Bride," he said quietly.

"Do not say so, Piers," I replied, "you who had always lived for us all!"

"Bride," he said, "I had not lived for God."

"Surely," I said, "to live for those He has given us is to live for God."

"I used to think so," he said; "and certainly loving our neighbors as ourselves is not always so easy, Bride, especially when our neighbors are very near, and we cannot quite like them. *But there is something more.* There is the first great commandment, you know, as well as the second; before the second, the foundation of the second. I do not think I had ever even tried to keep that. To love God with all our heart and soul and mind and strength must mean something else than loving our neighbor as ourselves. Our Lord did not use vain repetitions. To love God himself for His love to us, for himself! Sister, I had been learning for weeks that I have never done it. I felt it by the lives around me, which had something I had not. I saw it in Mr. Wilberforce's book on Practical Christianity. And if to break the greatest commandment is sin, I have sinned; not once or twice, or seventy times seven, but always."

"But," I said, "to obey is to love, to submit is to love. And you had obeyed, and had submitted, God knows."

"To love is to obey," he said; "to love is to submit; but to love is more. You know that, Bride, well."

I did. It was useless to attempt to argue or to

justify him to himself. There is no filling up chasms God has rent, with dust, or with rose-water.

There was a long pause.

At length I said—

“But you are not so sad about yourself now. What did you do?”

“I went in heart to God,” he said, “and confessed to him that He was my Father, and I had not honored him; that He was my Redeemer, and I had not been grateful to him. And I pleaded with him, because He is my Father, to forgive me; and because He is my Saviour, to save me; to give me to know and to love him, to reveal himself by the Holy Spirit to me. For I was sure that if I knew him as He is, I must love him. It must be only some crust, or veil, or cataract, in my eyes that hindered my seeing; and it could be only not seeing that hindered my loving. There was nothing to be created for me to see, only something in me to be removed that I might see. He, with His infinite love, was there. I asked him to open my heart that I might see and love.”

I could scarcely speak.

“He was sure to hear,” I said.

“Quite sure,” he replied. “There was but one answer—*Christ*. He gave me to see *Christ*.”

“You had no dream, no vision?” I said.

“What do we want of dreams and visions?” he replied. “Of old it was in divers manners. In these last days He has sent his Son. It is day, Bride, now—not night. It is revelation, not

clouds and darkness. The brightness of his glory has been unveiled, the express image of his person has come, full of grace and truth; has been a little child; has taken the little children in his arms; has touched the leper and healed him; has let the sinners touch him, and has forgiven them; has let them nail him to the Cross, and has prayed for their forgiveness; has loved us, and given himself for us; has borne our sins in his own body on the Cross, and has redeemed us; has done all the holy will we have failed to do, to enable us to do it; has suffered what we could never have borne, to enable us to suffer; being forever one God, has made himself forever one with us, and is touched with the feeling of our infirmities; not pitiful only or beneficent, but *touched*; has loved me and given himself for me; for with him "us means not a *mass* of humanity, but a *multitude* of men and women. *And I know it, sister.* Thank God, I know it, now, for myself. And now that first commandment sometimes seems as unnecessary as a command to love my father or you; as much an instinct as breathing, as the love the heart has never lived without."

We were silent a long time. Then the carriage swept up to the porch. And Piers went to his room to rest, and I to mine.

There is no filling up chasms sin has made or God has made in humanity, or in the heart or conscience of any one of us, with anything but himself.



CHAPTER XXIII.

WE returned to Abbot's Weir through a very different land from that we had traversed on our way to Clapham at the beginning of the year. It was late in October. Once more there had been a good harvest. Everywhere arose the golden wheat-stacks of the plentiful crop just harvested. There seemed a new elasticity in the very air as we went back through the land relieved from the pressure of famine, with Piers restored to us—restored, as he felt, to more than a few added years; to life essential, spiritual, immortal.

The voices of the ploughboys, as they followed their teams through the brown fields which had just yielded their abundant stores, rang clear and joyous through the crisp autumn air. The men seemed to step with a firmer tread; the women sang to their children at work by the cottage doors as we passed through the villages; the children ran after the coach with vigorous limbs and lungs. The hollow-cheeked groups that had hung about the indoors had vanished. The land was full of stir,

and work, and hope. Eager groups there were, indeed, everywhere, watching what further confirmation of the new glad tidings we might bring. For all England was in an intoxication of joy at the new peace with France; the peace of Amiens. A week or two before, crowds had met in London to welcome the French Ambassador, had taken the horses out of his coach, and dragged it by Whitehall, through St. James's Park, to the park-entrance of the Admiralty, where the gallant Lord St. Vincent, still exceptionally in possession of his senses, had soberly recommended them, "if they were bent on doing the gentlemen this honor, at all events, to control their enthusiasm so far as not to upset the coach."

The French Ambassador must have received a shock to the national theory of the phlegmatic character of Englishmen.

In Bath, Mr. Wilberforce found the people "mad with joy." In many of the towns through which we passed, bells were ringing, crowds were hurrahing; in some, the streets had glorified themselves with arches of greenery, and such spasmodic displays of flags and boughs as England, puritanized out of her mediæval picturesqueness, and yet unenlightened by imitative modern æsthetics, could conjure out of her own unassisted brain.

"Peace, peace!" The glad tidings rang through the land, and the nation burst into one of those outbursts of great joy which are so pathetic when we think either to how little fruition they led, how

much aspiration they expressed, or how much they symbolize.

Yes, we hoped, some of us, it was "on earth," not only in one little corner of it; peace throughout Christendom; England being the last of the nations to hold out the right hand of fellowship to this new mysterious power born amid so much "blood, and fire, and vapor of smoke" in France.

All Europe, for the moment, was at peace. What murmurs there might be from the ashes of burnt villages in Switzerland, from cities in Italy or in Belgium plundered by armies or by tax-gatherers; what apprehension in the hearts of emperors at St. Petersburg or Vienna, and among the people everywhere, at a propaganda of liberty and fraternity, carried on like Mahomet's—by fire and sword—did not at that sanguine moment affect us.

The forms of the republic, in France, were as yet preserved intact; indeed, they had become more classical than ever. The edifice was crowned with a First Consul. What dangers to freedom or peace could lurk under a title so modest and so democratic?

There were, it is true, a few anxious and forecasting spirits who did not hope. The king, it was said, did not hope. He thought the peace only experimental. But then the king had been wont to hope at wrong times. He had hoped obstinately to crush the opposition of the American colonies; and the American colonies had detached themselves into a nation.

Mr. Pitt did not hope. But Mr. Pitt was out of office.

Many military and naval men did not hope. But then military and naval men naturally liked war.

And so we gave France everything she asked, except Naples and the Papal States (whether it was ours or not to give,) settlements in India, and at the Cape of Good Hope, West India Islands, Italian protectorates, Rhine frontiers; and then, like a fond and indulgent parent, fell into a rapture over her at consenting to be reconciled. Having everything she could possibly want, what could the result be but that she would be satisfied and keep quiet, and never disturb the family peace again?

Meantime there was bread enough and to spare, and work for every one who would work; and our England was a very merry and contented land to travel through in that genial October sunshine which had done such good work for her harvests, and was now touching her woods and ferny downs with every choicest and richest tint of bronze and gold.

How beautiful the dear old grey town looked in the depths of its green chalice, embossed with its crimson and golden woods, and rimmed with the warm tints of its fern-covered moors, and the soft blues and purples of its rocky "tors!" It must be confessed that its solid old monastic bridge looked a little diminutive after Westminster, and

the streets a little narrow, and the houses, which had once seemed so tall, rather low, and the whole town dwarfed and unimposing to an extent that it seemed a disloyalty to admit even to oneself. But then the land around it was so large and free; the long sweep of the valley; the wide world of those well-known woods free to every one to gather endless primroses and bluebells in; the range beyond range of its wild moorland hills.

A sense of freedom came over me in more senses than one; for in more senses than one I felt as if our little human world of Abbot's Weir, like the place itself, though small in itself, opened out into a wider world than that of Clapham.

I felt it first when Amice, in herself so wide a world, stopped the postchaise we were in for a moment of welcome at the great park-gate of Court; again, when Madame des Ormes, leaning on the arm of our Claire, greeted us in her sweet French at our own old arched doorway; when Reuben Pengelly blessed God that we were safe back again; and most of all when I sat alone for half an hour that evening with Loveday Benbow, and looked out once more with her eyes into that wide world of which not Abbot's Weir or Clapham only, or only England, or even Christendom, were mere fragments, but this whole visible world of space, and all this transitory age of time.

Beautiful and sheltering as the woods and forests are, the finest and freest tree cannot be the product of the forest; it must stand apart, where it

has need of a more robust strength to maintain its own unaided battles, and space to develop into a freer individuality and a larger symmetry.

At Clapham, the current against the stream was in itself so broad and strong, that there was little demand on spiritual nerve and muscle in gliding along it. If, as Goethe says, character unfolds itself in the storms of the world, it must be in storms encountered by the solitary bark, not in a fleet of vessels cheering each other on.

Very delightful it was to come back to Loveday, and find her all I had left her and imagined her and more than all I had found since. The deepest and highest life is by necessity also really the broadest; broader by all the space in heaven and the infinity of God. If we deepen the channel enough, and connect it with the Fountain of Life, as with the ocean, we need not fear that it will be narrow; the very force and volume of the waters will make it broad.

With every one else one seemed to take up the old relationship just on a slightly different level, at least at first, with just a touch of strangeness, a kind of *soupeçon* of a new and foreign accent entering into our intercourse, a sense of new experiences gone through apart. With Loveday one seemed to have been present all the time, simply to go on, and not begin again at all. She always seemed a creature over whom time had no power. There she sat, as of old, dove-colored and white, with her dove-like voice and spiritual dove's wings; and

her youth, renewed like the eagle's, as of old, to defend that great multitude of the heavy-laden which were her brood.

No; Loveday was no dream. She was quite unchanged.

Mrs. Danescombe also was unchanged. And I felt she felt I was unchanged, and felt it with a shade of reproach and disappointment.

To have spent nine months at Clapham, in the society of my "influential cousins," and with all the superior clothing and manners of London at hand, by which to remodel my own, and to have come back just the same Bride Danescombe, unmodified, unengaged, it was difficult to understand, and not a little difficult for her to sustain; especially as every one else seemed rather to like it.

Reuben was not at all surprised.

"Didn't I tell thee, old woman," he said to Prisey, "she would bring back no London airs? What is London to such as she, beside old times?"

Prisey was surprised. She met me with a very elaborate courtesy, and was delightfully ruffled and taken aback when I returned it as for twenty years by a kiss.

And Madam Glanvil decreed with a nod that I was as well as could be expected, and would do, provided there were no hidden gems of Claphamic philanthropy lurking undeveloped.

"Infection does not come out at once, in some diseases," said she. "It was a dangerous experiment. But in a little while we shall see."

My dear cousin, Dick Fyford, was not a little changed; changed for one thing into a lieutenant, having been with Nelson at Copenhagen, and Nelson being a leader of the kind that leads in more ways than one to promotion; showing the way by being foremost, inspiring men to be their best, and also clearing the way by his terrible alternatives of victory or death. He had compacted into a man, having found a calling in which no amount of energy was superfluous, and no amount of daring out of place.

Moreover, much of the hardness, as well as the aimless restlessness of the boy had passed from him, or fitted into the right place in him.

He privately confessed to me that the wrongs of the common seamen were all but intolerable to *see*; say nothing of *suffering*.

"You were not so far wrong about impressment, Cousin Bride," said he, "as I thought you were, long ago, when I wished you were a boy, at Miss Felicity's; and would have fought you had you been one. There is work for your anti-slavery people nearer home than in the West Indies. Kidnapping, bad and little food, flogging, turning out to die like dogs when wounded and sick; terribly like negro slavery. Enough to make a man a Whig, or a Jacobin, or any thing to set it right." (Dick's politics were never abstract.) "The mutinies at the Nore and at Spithead were put down three years ago. And while Bonaparte keeps the old country awake, and Nelson keeps him down, all

may go right. But to be fed and flogged as those poor fellows are, and to fight as they do, is more like patriotism and the old Greeks and Romans and all that," (Dick's history was never very definite,) "than a good deal of the work people get stars and peerages for."

Dick was not indeed changed in his "constancy in loving," nor as yet in the object of that constant love. He had fallen deeper than ever into what he believed his unconquerable passion for Amice Glanvil.

This time it was "no child's play, no changing dream, but only too serious; presumptuous, he felt; desperate, he feared; but, hopeless or not, only to be torn from his heart with life."

"You are her friend, Cousin Bride," he said tragically; "you will understand."

I wished to be sympathetic, but I could not be encouraging. They seemed to me too far apart: she with her early depth of womanhood, under all her girlish impulsiveness, he with so much of the boyish yet about him, man as he was in courage and in command, where command was called for; to be at all likely to fit each other. But the difference between them seemed to Dick exactly the hopeful symptom in the case.

"Similar in friendship, Cousin Bride, opposites in love!" he said, with the sententiousness of long experience. "You and I, you know, have always understood each other better than any one; and you are the best friend I have, and always

were. Amice Glanvil and I do not understand each other, and never did. And there is the hope; feeble I confess; but one could live on a crumb from that table."

"We needs must love the highest when we see it."

Those early "little loves" of my cousin's often reminded me of Amice's portrait, the crocus-bulb, sending out its long feeler into the soil to find something to root itself to. They were no diletante fancies; they had all the humility of a genuine passion, and so, in their measure, did not sink but raise him. He never fancied any one was in love with him.

I said, he knew I always liked to do what I could for him.

"He did know. I had always been as good as a mother to him."

"Not quite that!" I remonstrated. "I thought that was too much even to try to be to any one."

"Well, as good as a grandmother, at all events, Cousin Bride," he said, "as good and indulgent and ready to help as the best grandmother that ever was!"

He meant it as a compliment; just as the old gentleman at Clapham, old enough to be my grandfather, had meant it as a compliment to ask me to be his wife.

It was plain I must accept the dignities of advanced age. Perhaps I should grow younger as my years increased. Meantime I would be as

grandmotherly as the duties of such a generally-recognized protectorate demanded.

Miss Felicity was rigidly changeless. As the tutelary Athena of Abbot's Weir, she seemed to grasp the *Ægis* with her firmest resolve, ready to turn it on any dragon's brood which might have sprung up in Piers or me, of presumption, or conceit, or London pride; and to appal them instantaneously into stone. However, she was soon reassured, and the *Ægis* vanished, and all the militant bearing disappeared, when I ventured to give her a snuff-box full of what Cousin Crichton had called "the finest Rappee" which I had brought for the Lieutenant.

It moved her much that any one should lay the smallest offering on the shrine, on which it seemed to her nothing that she should lay her life.

"You are a kind child, Bride Danescombe, she said, going back to the beginning of our friendship, to the foolscap and the stool of penance. "You are a dear, generous child. If any one wants you to be good to them for life, they have only to begin by doing you an injustice."

And Claire, was she changed?

She was nearly a year older. Yes, quite a year, and that is a great deal at sixteen.

She was a year older, for one thing, because her mother was a year older, too obviously.

A little more of a stoop in the dignified figure, of slowness in the step; the fire with which she spoke of the past no longer only subdued, but

fading; the light in which she saw the present a little dimmed; the fears with which she saw the future a little darker,—the future which was to her all embodied in her Claire, on whose face her eyes would rest so long with such a wistful solicitude.

An era of tender concealments had begun between the mother and child. When that long gaze at last would meet the quick, anxious glance of Claire—Claire, who had been feeling it so long, and had not dared to look,—the solicitude would melt instantly out of both faces; and on one side or the other, some tender little pleasantry would dart out to veil the anxious care which lay beneath.

And so thinking, dear souls, or trying to think, they had quite imposed on one another, they went on. And meantime their little stratagems had successfully imposed on Léontine.

“Ah, Mademoiselle,” she remarked to me one day, soon after my return, mournfully shaking her head, and glancing from Claire (who was humming an old nursery chanson as she arranged her autumn leaves in the next room) to her mother, watching her from the couch. “That poor cherished child, she knows no more than the babe unborn what is before her!”

“Do any of us, Léontine?” I replied. “If she did know, what better could she do?”

“But the shock, Mademoiselle Bride, the waking up, think how terrible!”

“What is to prevent what is terrible from being a shock, and a waking up, Léontine?” I said, think-

ing of Piers's illness. "Would fear help us? or foreseeing? seeing the next step?"

"But when the next step may be a precipice?"

"What can we do, Léontine, but look to Him who sees *beyond* the next step? What can we wish for them more? Besides," I added, trying to combat my own fears, "Madame is not old. She may revive. She has such a power of life."

"Alas, Madame is old," Léontine replied.

"What does Revolution mean but that the whole machinery of the State has gone wrong, and the wheels spin madly round like a whirlwind instead of stealing round imperceptibly like the hands of a clock? Madame lived a thousand revolutions of the years in one day; one day, Mademoiselle, which she never speaks of to any unless to Miss Loveday; one day when the best blood of France was shed between L'Abbaye and La Force. There is no turning the sun-dial backwards, Mademoiselle, over such degrees! But to you and that angelic child there is yet sunshine; and in the sunshine the birds must sing. Let them, poor innocents, while they can; while they can!"

But if Claire had grown a year during those months of separation, Piers had grown and gained more. To him, in that sickness,

"The sudden frost was sudden gain,
And gave all ripeness to the grain
It might have drawn from after heat."

No life, worth calling life, is to be measured by years; and he at eighteen was a being one could

rest on, and did rest on, who cared for us all, instead of needing to be cared for ; and if that does not mean the best part of manhood, what does ?

Claire met him, when we returned, frankly, joyously, just as of old, with that combination of French and English manners which was in her so charming, with a gracious little courtesy, and a frank shake of the hand, and a little pleasantry about his steam-engine. But when she looked up with her happy eyes and met his, something silenced the little pleasantry, and flushed for a moment the bright face, and troubled the smiling eyes.

Was it a look in his, or only that his face was still pale and thin ?

However it was, so it happened that they changed towards each other. A distance came, and a reverence, and a doubting of one another, and a comprehension of one another,—and a death of old things, and a creation of new, which made them further from each other and nearer each other than all the world besides ; yes, all the world, Piers and I, and Claire and I, included.

On one ground they still met free from self-consciousness, or that double self-consciousness of love. One sacred care united them, old and yet mournfully new, the tender, thoughtful care for Claire's mother.

I could not but see how her eyes followed them both, and seemed to embrace them in one deep, motherly gaze. Sometimes I used to wonder

whether, just in this one case, her old French customs would not have been better than ours.

Madame and my father could have negotiated it all so amicably, and watched as a double providence over their two children, and betrothed them quite simply, and given them sanction to love each other as much as they could, that is, as much as they did. The sweet sacredness and mystery and reverence would have remained, and the anxious questionings, the unreasonable fears, the distracting doubts would have vanished. Yet, would the one have remained? or would the other have vanished? Could any arrangement have helped them to find each other? Could any arrangement, they having found each other, have saved them the self-doubtings, and questionings of one another, the fears and solitudes which were but the shadows of the great love?

And, indeed, could Madame or my father have dared to initiate any such treaty? To accept it was another thing.

To attend mass and be a little *philosophe* was one thing; not to attend mass, to be definitely Protestant, and religious to the heart's core, was another. Infinitely better, I believe, Madame felt, for Piers himself. But for Claire? That Protestant world, with its endless divisions, and its thin rigid partitions, seemed to Madame such an inextricable labyrinth, such a seething chaos. It was true that France was a chaos, but then France had for the moment abandoned religion. When religion

itself, the Church itself became a chaos, what hope for the world—what hope for little Claire drifting to and fro on that deep? Death might, indeed, break down those partitions, might reconcile all faithful souls in Him who came to atone; for her these perplexities already grew thin and faint; but Claire had to live, and who would guide her through?

All this and a thousand things more were in Madame's softened eyes as she watched those two together.

Perhaps it was well for her and for them that the guiding thread could not be in her trembling hands.

Our brother Francis was not changed. We had talked very often of him, Piers and I, during his convalescence—in our drives, and in quiet moments on the journey home. I knew well it was of Francis Piers had thought when he had said in that first long conversation in Cousin Crichton's chariot, that it was "not always easy to love our neighbors as ourselves, especially when they were very near neighbors and we couldn't *like* them."

We had confessed to each other that the feeling which had grown up in our hearts to Francis was very little like love, was terribly like the opposite of love.

When people whose natures grate on ours at every point are brought into contact with us at every point, something stronger than a negative dis-

approval, or even a judicial dislike, is near at hand, and very apt to possess us ere we are aware.

"Hating our brother whom we have seen" is not altogether such an impossible sin, when we see in our brother exactly the things we hate, and feel we *ought* to hate. Hatred is, after all, in its beginnings, only dislike unkindled by friction.

And Francis had so many ways and qualities that we could not even *try* to like. Little selfishnesses with a disguise, little untruthfulnesses with a purpose, little unfairnesses which it seemed mean to notice, little pretensions which it seemed petty to resist, which nevertheless fretted one more than a great injustice; a general shallowness all through, which, like any shallow waters, had a fussing, fretting way of making little things seem great, and little actions important, and keeping one's mind fixed on the surface.

"If one might believe in transmigration," I once said, "it would be a comfort as regards Francis. Then one might take him for a larva—all outside—and one might hope that inside was developing some imperceptible creature, if it was only a butterfly,—which was the real Francis; to appear in some future state of existence. As it is there is only the shell of the larva."

"There cannot be only that shell, Bride," Piers replied. "That is the point. We have to find out the creature inside. It must be there, and we must get to it. When we get home we must try."

In that distance, in that sunshiny atmosphere

of Cousin Crichton's, in the joy of renewed strength, and of that new life of faith, every victory seemed so easy, every victory so sure to inaugurate a conquest !

So we came home ; and we did try. It seemed as if Francis must have changed, too, and must recognize our new purpose and meet us in it.

But there he was, as smooth and impenetrable as ever, with no more idea there was anything which required change in him than the Apollo Belvidere ; there they were again, the old difficulties, as real, as impossible not to dislike, as difficult not to have struck into active fire as ever.

One misfortune was that he combined my father's genial manner with my stepmother's cold and superficial character. It seemed to me sometimes as if their natures were so unlike, that the nature which sprang from them had a kind of necessity of falseness in it, from the impossibility of any true blending of the elements.

He had taken to one habit which was new, at least new in form. In childhood he always, as I have said, continued to glide into possession of our rights, our toys, coveted place in games, in short of whatever coin was the currency of our childish treasures, while we had been referred to the Sermon on the Mount to satisfy our claims.

Now that he was sixteen, and money,—the coin of the large world—became his currency, he began to borrow money. In the easiest way. His week's allowance was not due until to-morrow,

or he was just out of cash, and a marvellous bargain had offered which would be lost to-morrow ; or some one had lent him a trifle, and he knew neither our father nor Piers would like the family to be in debt for such a bagatelle. And of course the morrow of payment never came.

And all such paltry sums, it seemed ungenerous to think of them, and a cruelty to dream of telling our father ! And yet our little pocket allowance dwindled very perceptibly before those repeated trifles. And Francis was gliding further and further into the fatal habit of doing what he liked, and having what he liked, without counting the cost.

“ But what was to arouse him ? ”

To all our remonstrances he opposed his cool impenetrability and his genial manner.

Once indeed he was so far roused by a very earnest warning, as to say that if Piers made it so unpleasant to borrow, he would take care not to trouble him again.

But he found it more unpleasant to do without things he wished for, forgave Piers his “ rather unbrotherly ” conduct, and consented to mulct our treasury again.

What ought we to do ? Each successive grievance was so small, it seemed impossible to trouble our father with it, deep as his hatred of debt, and his love of us all was. And moreover, not only our tenderness for our father, but our very fear of being hard on Francis, kept us back.

It would have been to the "natural man," in both of us, such a righteous satisfaction to have those ancient interpretations of the Sermon on the Mount disproved, and to see that disguise, to us so thin, to others apparently so impenetrable, shaken off, that we dared not lift a finger to hasten the revelation.

"What will be the end of it, Piers?" I said.

"Debt, hopeless debt," he said gravely. "Disgrace for us all, perhaps. Because, happily for Francis, this is not a world constructed so as to make debt in the long-run either pleasant or possible."

It was on a wintry Sunday afternoon. We were walking on the hillside behind the garden, over the field-path, iron-bound with frost, cakes of ice in the little creeks of the Leat where we used to harbor our fleets, blades of grass stiff and white with frozen dew.

From the grey Tors, sharply defined against the frosty wintry-blue of the sky, came a keen air, bracing every nerve and muscle.

From the great philanthropic combats of Clapham we had come back to each little pricking difficulties! And yet nevertheless the whole atmosphere—moral, mental, and physical—felt to me more invigorating, more such as one's full strength might develop, and do its finest work in.

I, in my way, had brought with me countless schemes for the transplanting of Clapham philanthropic works into the virgin soil of Abbot's Weir.

Piers, in his way, had set his heart on one small good work, which he intended forthwith to begin. This was neither more nor less than a Sunday-school.

We were on our way that afternoon to Reuben Pengelly, in the Foundry-yard, to consult him as to the best way of carrying out what we believed to be altogether a new idea in Abbot's Weir.

Long icicles were hanging from the stationary water-wheel. The most beautiful fairy-like fret-works were circling and fringing the cascade. The old yard was absolutely still; Reuben's porch empty.

We knocked at the door, full of our project, and then lifted the latch.

Around the old man's knees were gathered three little children, to whom he was telling Bible stories, as he used to Piers and me.

"Here have we been making our grand schemes, Piers," I whispered, "and meanwhile Reuben has begun! How many things the Methodists have begun!"

"Yes," said Piers, "the Thames at Westminster is something. But the little springs that run among the hills come first."

"And they are more!" I rejoined.

"At all events," he replied, "there would have been no river without them."



CHAPTER XXIV.

BUT most of all I found the change in Amice. She had changed outwardly, as no one else had. Her face was thinner, her great dark eyes seemed larger, and looked further into one, than ever.

I saw it even in that minute when the post-chaise stopped at the gate for her welcome to us.

And the first day I spent at Court I felt it more.

She said she had missed me and my "good in everything," and had fallen deeper than ever into her "dualism." "Except," she said, "that the dualism is only on the surface now, far enough down indeed, Bride; yet underneath is something else. Underneath is the Atonement, Bride, the Father and the Son, the Manger and the Cross, and man reconciled. At the very root of all is not dualism, but the incarnate crucified Christ. At the very heart of all is the light. That I never lose. But oh! the conflict between the light and darkness goes down terribly far, and goes in terribly far, and goes on terribly long!"

She looked to me like some of the old pictures I had seen in London of Roman Catholic saints; not ecstatic, though she was capable of ecstasy, but full of high resolve, as if she were clasping to her inmost heart some invisible torture.

Certainly, also, there was deeper dualism in the household.

Madam Glanvil's steel-grey eyes seemed absolutely to cut with their sharp suspicious glances. And she missed no effectual opportunity of using that two-edged sword which, by prerogative of age and deafness she wielded.

Formerly, if the conflict between Amice and Madam Glanvil had perplexed me, it had amused me far more. The combat seemed all tournament work, mere tilting; Amice often had the best of it, and the militant old lady was more than half pleased that she had.

But now something was there which showed the conflict to be in earnest.

The air was charged with thunder. The Jupiter-nod had given place to the bolts of Jove; no mere theatrical thunder-rolls, but real lightnings ready to fall, no one could tell where or when.

Not half so many cutting things were said by Madam Glanvil, but when they came the thrusts were from no tilting-sword. They were meant to tell; and the pain to me was that they did tell. Amice did not ward them off, or even seem to evade them. Something seemed to have taken pos-

session of her inmost heart which compelled her to receive those stabs, and let the iron enter into her soul.

A severer legislation also prevailed with regard to Chloe and those "lazy brutes," Cato and Cæsar. "They should be made to understand their place, if other people did not understand it for them, Madam Glanvil was determined."

Poor Chloe and Cato and Cæsar were entirely prohibited from attending the Methodist meetings.

Happy enough for them if they were allowed to enter the church, like their betters. In their own country they would probably have been knocked on the head long before this, as sacrifices to some idol or devil. In the plantation they would have been driven to the cane-work, and might have been glad, idle creatures that they were, if they escaped Sunday without a flogging, say nothing of psalm-singing."

She was cruel in words, Amice thought, because deeds were impossible. The possibility of cruel deeds, Amice always said, would have awakened her to mercy.

It is said words do not break bones, but they break worse than bones. Altogether, the three negroes had now a cowed and humble look, dreadful to me to see in a dog, much more in a human being.

In general their good humor and light-heartedness won them fair treatment in the household. But they, especially the men, were often thoughtless and childish, and the spirit of tyranny is too

ready to be evoked, especially in those who are themselves accustomed to be on the lowest step, the drudges of the petty tyranny of others.

It was not only the cowed and anxious look with which they followed Madam Glanvil's eyes; it was the fawning and cringing on every one, that I could not bear to see. The one was merely the cowed animal, the other was the degraded and humbled man.

And Amice could do nothing, except keep Chloe as much with herself as possible, that they might bear the blows together.

Indeed, of all the household, Chloe seemed to me the only really free and happy person.

I said so to Amice.

"Yes," she replied, "Chloe went down into the depths long ago, and has picked up all the Beatitudes there. Besides, Bride," she added, "Chloe has *only* to suffer; she has not to be the cause of suffering. She has not to choose. She is free because she is a slave; for slaves they are still, practically, exiled and helpless, and ignorant, as they are. But I, on the other hand, am a slave just because I am free."

We were in the library. She was leaning against the library ladder.

"You know, Bride," she said, "I *could* leave Granny altogether; I am of age, and my fortune is my own. But just because I could, I cannot. If she kept me in within bolts and bars, or in chains, I feel sure I should break them and escape. But

the terrible thing is, she keeps me in fetters, and imprisons me with love. Yes; you may look astonished; with love. Granny loved my father better than her own life; and now she loves me better than my own happiness. She has nursed me like the tenderest mother through dangerous infectious illnesses—through a fever I brought with me from the West Indies, and through small-pox. She took the small-pox. You can see the marks now in her fine stern old face. Only one or two; but there they are. And she bore it for me. She loves me in that kind of way, that if, for instance, I were in love with some one she thought it unwise for me to marry, she would let me pine away and die, rather than let me marry as she did not like. And then she would sit alone until she died, and never take another creature to her heart, and never have a doubt that she had done the best thing for me that she could. Remember, she has never had her will crossed all her life; and she clings to her own will as a martyr to his faith. She loves me, and hates what I care most about—my poor slaves, and religion. She thinks the negroes a set of idle savages, unfortunately necessary conditions of West Indian property, who are always, by their obstinacy and folly, defrauding me of the revenue my father's plantations ought to yield. She will no more go into the question, what right we have to enslave them, than into the question, what right we have to break in horses. Of course, neither horses nor negroes like it; but except for our convenience, there is no need for

horses or negroes to live at all. They would be hunted down like wolves. They do hunt each other down like wolves in Africa, she says. Then as to religion. She declares that the Methodists, Moravians, Baptists, all of them, set the negroes on to insurrection; and of the horrors of negro insurrections she speaks with dreadful plainness, as you know she can. And as you know, her beliefs are not in the least degree dependent on evidence. Of course there is no moving her. Towards the negroes she is simply merciless; towards the philanthropists and missionaries she is absolutely fanatical."

"But to you, Amice!" I said; "She is changed to you. You have had some encounters, I am sure."

"Yes," she said. "I was firm about Chloe and the Wesleyan meetings. I said Chloe had lost all she loved in the world but me, and had saved me, life and soul, as Granny knew, left a motherless child in that perilous climate, in the midst of that hardening, iniquitous system. I said Chloe had only that one delight, those prayer-meetings of Reuben Pengelly's, where they prayed prayers and sang hymns she could understand, and that this Chloe must not be robbed of."

"And you did not succeed?"

"I did succeed with Granny. She was very angry. She stormed and raged at me; but she said Chloe might go, at her peril and at mine. She had been brought up in devil-worship and it was but natural she should like it. For that the

Methodists set on the slaves to deeds of devils there was not the shadow of a doubt."

"So Chloe went again?"

"No, Chloe would not go. She laughed and cried, and asked if I thought the dear Lord could only be found at meetings. The prayers were good; but soon we should get where we were beyond praying; and the hymns were good, very good, and very comforting, and we should have plenty of them soon. Was she going to make missis and missie at war because of her getting a little bit of comfort a little bit sooner? Was that like the good Lord? And so Chloe will not go."

"And Madam Glanvil still persists that the negroes if different from brutes, are only different because they can be savages?"

"Yes, you know, she always persists. The persistence is from within; anything outside does not affect it. The trial is to love both, Bride—Granny and the slaves, and the missionaries; oppressor and oppressed; to love all, and to be able to help none."

"That will not last long," I said.

"Not always," she replied. "But it does last rather long. However I have found some comfort."

She went up the ladder, and took down a book from the shelves; a clumsy, badly bound old book, on yellow, coarse paper, in what seemed to me Black Letter. For at that time the German language as little formed an ordinary part of an English girl's requirements as Sanscrit.

It was a German narrative of the missions of the United Brethren, the *Unitas Fratrum*, called Moravians.

"At last I have found the Christians who take up the cross, the real hard, heavy, disgraceful, slave's cross," she said, "and care for people just because no one else does; the Christianity that can help me, and the Christians who have helped my poor slaves."

I took the homely old books in my hand; the first German books I had ever handled. What a world of difference that implies in our English thought and education!

Coleridge was at this very time making his first dive into that great river of German thought, itself but recently issued from its subterranean course to the daylight. Three years before he had gone to study at Göttingen, but his translation or paraphrase of Schiller's "Wallenstein" had certainly not reached Abbot's Weir; and Clapham was too busy with its own literature of edification, and its edification of the world, white and black, to leave much leisure for any other literature of edification, still less for any literature which it would have regarded as not tending to edification at all.

"They are queer, clumsy old books," said Amice. "They look as if my good Brethren had had them printed and bound in some experimental brotherly workshop, as I dare say they had."

"They look as quaint and dry and old-fashion-

ed as some of Loveday's Quaker books," I said. "And very likely they are as living and true."

"As fresh and living as the New Testament, almost, they seemed to me," she said, kissing one of them—"a great deal fresher and younger than the Apostolic fathers, except Ignatius, and bits of that epistle to Diognetus." She had explored so many odd corners of thought in that library. "And it is such a comfort they are in German," she added, "because Granny is not suspicious of them, as she has grown to be of some of my books. Unfortunately (no, *not* unfortunately!) she discovered the other day a copy of John Wesley's 'Thoughts upon Slavery,' and threw it into the fire. However, she had read it first. She had read it through, and the plain, strong English has sunk into her conscience, I know, as it did into mine; for she is continually bringing out bits of it to worry, or to throw at me, by which I know they worry her. Anti-slavery societies will never create a nobler appeal than that. I know much of it, happily, by heart, as Granny does by conscience.

"*Can human law turn darkness into light, or evil into good?*" he writes. *Notwithstanding ten thousand laws, right is right, and wrong is wrong still; there must still remain an essential difference between justice and injustice, cruelty and wrong.*

"One by one, besides, it answers all Granny's favorite arguments.

"*You say, It is necessity!*" he says, speaking of the dreadful slave-stealing and slave ships. *I*

answer, *You stumble at the threshold. "I deny that villany is ever necessary. A man can be under no necessity of degrading himself into a wolf. You say the blacks are stupid and wicked. It is you who have kept them stupid and wicked."*

"'You call your forefathers wolves,' said Granny, in unconfessed reply to this. 'You say we made the slaves stupid and wicked. That is what, in modern days, is called filial piety!'

"'It is necessary to my gaining a hundred thousand pounds,' Wesley goes on, dramatizing the objector. 'I deny that your gaining a thousand is necessary to your present or eternal happiness.'

"'The Methodists are Anabaptists—Communists,' says Granny. 'They would reduce every one to their own beggarly level.'

"'It is necessary for the wealth and glory of England,' Mr. Wesley continues, still quoting the objector. 'Wealth is not necessary to the glory of any nation,' he replies; 'wisdom, virtue, justice, mercy, generosity, public spirit, love of our country—these are necessary to the glory of a nation, but abundance of wealth is not.'

"'Glorious old John Wesley,' I said, parenthetically. "I wonder if they have read that book at Clapham?"

"Granny has read that, at all events," she replied. "I know it because she called Mr. Wesley a traitor to his country, worse than a Frenchman,—whether a Jacobite or a Jacobin, she is not clear—probably both in the germ. However, the

book has burnt itself in. What I long to know is, if the tender appeal at the end to the *hearts* of the slaveowners, and to God for help to the helpless, has touched her. I think it must. It *is* good, Bride, to have the planters appealed to as if they also had souls and hearts. Sometimes I think some of your anti-slavery friends a little forget that. It is difficult to love oppressor and oppressed as *both* human creatures ; after all, both astray and lost, and sorely in need of help. Perhaps there is some good, after all, in having to do it, not with one's wise, philanthropical heart only, but with one's foolish, trembling, quivering, natural heart, as I cannot help doing ; painful as it is."

Then, hugging her clumsy German books to her heart, as she might a living creature that felt being petted, she took me up stairs into her bedroom—that delightful old room in the oldest gable of the old Elizabethan house, partly in the roof, with low mullioned windows, looking far over the woods and the river to the grey moorland hills.

On the floor were piled heaps of books on all subjects, in many languages. Amice had no fancy for dainty fittings. Her luxuries were of another kind from those of Cousin Crichton's house ; poetical, rather than comfortable, or picturesque.

The sole luxuries of that room were the capacious old *escritoire* that had belonged to her father, with a fascinating treasury of small drawers and pigeon-holes, and a desk that drew out ; and those ever-increasing heaps of books which were poor

Chloe's distraction ; with that low window-seat on which we had spent so many hours of talk, in winter twilights, or in the heat of summer noons.

"Now," she said, as we seated ourselves, "I will tell you the history of me and my German books. When you went away last January, and I had nothing but books left to talk out my heart to, I came, in a corner of a cupboard of the library, on some records of the Missions of "the people called Moravians" in Greenland and in the West Indies. And I saw that the first mission to the West Indies was begun by a man called Leonhard Dober, a Moravian potter from Herrnhut, who, on a journey to Denmark with Count Zinzendorf, met a West Indian negro slave, and was so touched with compassion for the misery of those poor helpless blacks, that he set his whole heart on going to tell them they had a Saviour. He set his heart on this so fixedly, that being told by objectors there was no other way of teaching the slaves but by becoming a slave, *he proposed to become a slave himself*, that, driven to the daily toil with them working in the plantations among them, and sharing their burdens, he might by any means save some of them. It seemed to me as absolutely taking up the Cross and following Christ as anything in this world ever was."

"Did he do it?" I asked.

"My English book did not say. It stopped just there. But in the same cupboard I found some German books which, by the words *Unitas*

Fratrum on the outside, I knew must be about these same Moravians. Of course I was determined to find out, and if one has set one's mind on finding out anything, of course one does not let a language stand in one's way. Granny seeing me one day with those books, gave a little sigh, and shook her head pathetically, for her.

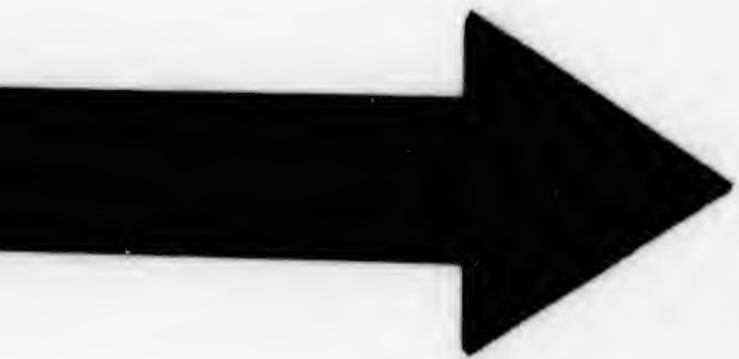
“Poor foolish Aunt Prothesea!” said she. ‘Yes, that comes of being wilful, and taking up with strange notions. She went to London and met a crazy foreigner who called himself a Count, as they generally do. And this Count made her as crazy as himself. Some new religion he had, not altogether Popish or Protestant. They used crucifixes, and lived in communities; not exactly monasteries, for they married; which was, of course, better than being monks and nuns—unless they married the wrong people, which poor Aunt Prothesea did. She went to some unpronounceable place in Saxony, married some one they called an Elder of the Church, not ill-born, they said, but older, at all events, than herself about half a century, I believe. And naturally he died; and unnaturally she pined for her Elder. They put her into a widows’ house, as they called it, and she didn’t like it; who would? To be classified like the vicar’s beetles; or like adjectives and substantives in the grammar; or like all the people who are one eyed and one-armed; classified, and penned up with a lot of women. So she came back to Court, and had a room given her; your room it

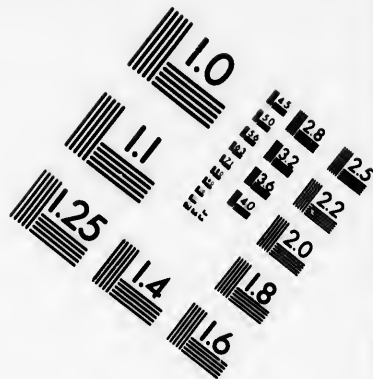
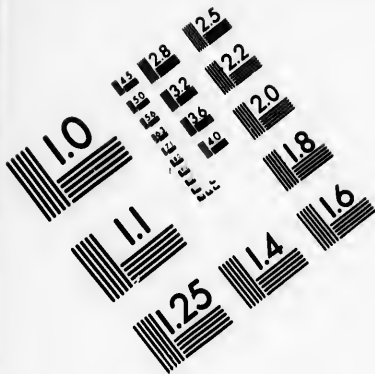
was, by-the-bye. And I remember she brought back a heap of ridiculous foreign books with her not only not in a language, but not in an alpha any rational person can read.' You know, Granny thinks all foreign languages either an impertinence or a joke; and would consider it an intolerable affectation to attempt to pronounce them in anything but English fashion.

"But did she tell you anything more about the books?"

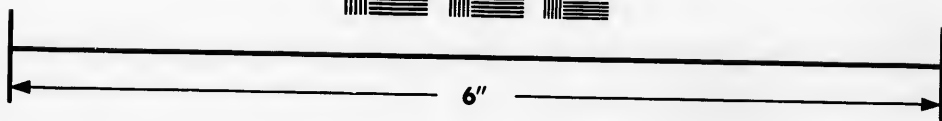
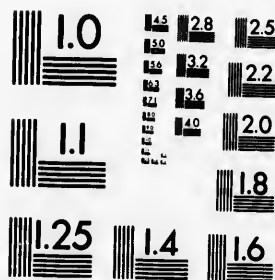
"She said they were half in that cupboard in the library, and half in an old closet in the wall in my bedroom. And there I found all I wanted, a dictionary, German and Latin it was, and a grammar, German and French. And so, all this summer, Bride, you having deserted me, I have been living with my great Aunt Prothesea, and her United Brethren. And you cannot think how doubly delightful this old room has become to me, or what a companion and friend my great aunt has become to me. I read the hymns as if she sang them to me. They are marked and underlined, Bride; in more than one page, stained as if with tears. And I read the old "Berlinische Reden" of Count Zinzendorf; and better still, some older books by Martin Luther; letters, table-talk, sermons, commentaries. They are so strong and daring, so quivering with life, those words of Martin Luther, so delightfully one-sided, and so gloriously many-sided; one side at a time, I mean—unguarded, unbalanced, bold, full, free, like the







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Bible, and *then* a thousand other sides, like our human hearts, like the Bible, and like no other religious books that I know. Not a bit of grey in them, not a neutral tint; every color and every tint and every shade, to meet all the countless shades and colors, the countless thirsts and hungers, and joys and sorrows of our hearts."

"But Luther was not a Moravian?" I said. How dim the name of Luther was to me! like a mere Heading in a catalogue; and to Amice he was a living man—yes, living, then and now, once and forever?

"No, certainly," she said; "Luther was not a Moravian. He was Luther. Nor am I a Moravian," she added, with her little quick dropping of laughter. "I am Amice Glanvil, your Amice. Your Amice, who goes to church every Sunday, and has no intention of becoming an adjective, or an atom, in any community, married or unmarried, even the best in the world. Were you afraid I was in process of transformation?"

I had been a little afraid as to what those curious black letters might lead. They connected themselves in my mind in some unreasonable way with black arts and mystical ideas. There were Jacob Böhme, Swedenborg, and sundry mystical and unutterable Teutonic personages, of whom I had a vague idea that they were a kind of Protestant Simeon Stylites, or Faqueers, who, in some symbolical way, adapted to European practicabilities, lived on pillars, or stood permanently on one

leg, or symbolically stretched out one arm until it grew immovable, or contemplated "the Silent Nothing," or the everlasting No, or their own consciousness, until consciousness ceased to be conscious.

Moreover, I had some idea that Reuben Pengelly had once spoken doubtfully of the Moravians, as "Antinomians," whatever that meant, or as opponents of Mr. Wesley, which was Reuben's strongest form of Anathema.

Amice admitted that this was true. But she told me that the Wesleys had first learned the possibility of a liberating and gladdening religion from seeing the fearlessness of some Moravians in a storm, on the voyage across the Atlantic. She said that as far as she could understand the matter, Mr. Wesley and Count Zinzendorf were both kings, and that it being simply impossible that they should both reign in one kingdom, the division of the kingdom had become a necessity; but that the difference of opinion which divided them was a mere accident.

She thought they meant essentially the same on the very point on which they separated. Indeed, Mr. Wesley himself had said to the Count, at one moment, that the difference between them was only one of words.

Mr. Wesley contended for growth in holiness, and possible *perfection*, by which he seemed to mean a state in which holiness became instinctive.

Count Zinzendorf contended for holiness as

being not so much a *commandment* as a *promise* to the Christian ; in other words, for faith in Christ as making the desire of holiness instinct ; for sanctification, not as a constrained *work*, as the spontaneous free *fruit* of the Spirit.

Both looked on holiness as the great aim and the great promise ; both looked to Christ as its source ; both regarded faith as the surrender of the whole being, the dependence of the whole being on God, as the means.

If there was a difference, it was that Wesley looked on this free, glad, instinctive goodness as the attainment of the advanced saint, Zinzendorf as the right of the simplest child who lives by the new life ; that Wesley dwelt on the Christian life more as a warfare—the Moravians more as a growth ; on the resisting evil, the Moravians more on the conquest of evil by good.

Amice at all events had evidently found her intellectual element in the German literature, and her especial spiritual element in that old book of German hymns. Her beautiful, white spirit-wings seemed to expand and grow strong in it.

I cannot say whether there may not have been some unreasonable and exaggerated hymns among them. I have yet to find the hymn-book which I should not think enriched by omissions.

But, first through Amice's sympathetic translations, and afterwards by their own simple profound, inimitable words, those hymns have grown into a portion of my own life ; so that I feel as un-

able to judge them critically as the voices which sang me lullabies in infancy. To her, I believe, the original attraction was the contrast of their profound peace to the war in her own heart and life; the contrast of their simplicity and singleness of aim with her natural tendency to see everything in its subtlest relations, and on every side.

"Redemption, liberation, reconciliation, atonement, breathe through every line," she said. "Redemption, liberation, reconciliation in HIM who is the Redeemer, the Mediator, the Sacrifice, the Sufferer, the Conqueror, but most of all the Sufferer, with us, for us, in us; and all never for one instant to be separated, or to be conceived of, to all eternity, as separate from Him."

Their theology is Jesus:—

"Du dessen menschlich Leben,
 Das unsere selig macht;
 Du dessen Geist aufgeben
 Den Geist uns wieder bracht
 Den wir verloren halten;
 Du unser Fleisch und Bein;
 Ach unter deinem Schatten
 Ist's gut ein Mensch zu seyn."

"Yes," she said, "under His shadow it is good, good,—good for ever, everywhere, and for every one, to be a human creature; good for me, for Chloe, for all."

"And those are the words my poor widowed Aunt Prothesea loved," she said. "I smile sometimes when I think how sorrowful and stricken they thought her, and how her heart must have sung.

and been at rest here over these dear old books, in this dear old room."

"And these are the words, Bride, in which Leonhard Dober taught our poor black slaves. For I found the end of that story. He went in spite of all discouragement to those poor outcasts, not exactly as a slave, but poor, despised, as one ready to be, in all things except sin, one with them. He reached those poor broken hearts. 'Sweet, too sweet,' they said, 'are the tidings you bring to us.'

'That deep abyss of blessed love
In Jesus Christ to us unsealed'

was unsealed to hundreds of those parched and weary hearts. So easy it was to them to confess themselves to be 'nothing,' wretched, sinful! In Antigua the planters acknowledged that Christianity as taught by the Moravians made the negroes worth twice as much as slaves. And now there are congregations of Christian negroes in many of the islands; some Moravian and some Methodist. Zinzendorf's followers and Wesley's do agree there. Ah, Bride, I often think, if we could get down low enough, we should all agree here; as when we get up high enough we shall all agree there."

"But Bride," she added, "I have a little hidden hope, that it seems almost a treachery to you to have; yet almost a treachery if I have it, to hide from you."

We were sitting on that low window-seat.

The moon had come up and was shimmering in a quiet pool of the river below.

A shiver went to my heart, as she took my two hands according to a custom of hers, and pressed them against her face.

"I cannot set my slaves free yet," she said "whatever you or Piers may think. The fines, legal expenses, etc., for setting them free, would take more than the estate is worth, and after all the poor enfranchised creatures would be left quite helpless, and might become the slaves of any avaricious white who chose to claim them. It is more than mere money that I want one day to give to my slaves."

"I know, I know!" I said, "you want to give your life, yourself. You want to be a martyr. I do wish, I almost wish—your Aunt Prothesea had died before her Elder, in Germany, and all her books had been buried with her. I cannot, cannot part with you, Amice. How can I? Piers will marry—and every one else will die or change. How can I let you go, and go there? For the blacks are savages, and the planters are some of them worse."

"I shall not go, I hope, Bride," she said, smiling, "until I am *sent*;—and when I am sent you will have to help send me. And you will. You will help me more than any one, as you always do. And meantime if I have a taste for martyrdom, I think it may be gratified as easily, in my small way, here as in the West Indies. Only my Mo-

ravians will not hear of self-denial. 'Do you think it was *self-denial* to the Lord Jesus,' Count Zinzendorf said to John Wesley, 'when he came down from heaven to rescue a world?' No, Bride it was *love*, and that swallows up everything; and first of all *self*, which it has not done yet for me.'



. 'Do you
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No, Bride
ything; and
yet for me."



CHAPTER XXV

PIERS and I were very full of our project of establishing a Sunday-school.

The word has not certainly, in these days, an exciting or a romantic sound. It does not exactly represent an "advanced" phase of philanthropy.

But to us in Abbot's Weir, in those days, it represented an advance which to Piers and me, and to Claire and Amice, was more exciting than any romance. To the conservative element of Abbot's Weir it represented an element of progress, most daring, not to say Utopian and Chimerical. "Utopian" was my Uncle Fyford's term, "Chimerical" Mr. Rabbidge's.

"You will lift people out of their places," said my uncle, "and upset all orderly arrangements, until the country will be as unsettled as France. The principles of the Christian religion should be inculcated from the pulpit, as I endeavor to do. If sacred things are to be taught to ignorant infants by boys and girls, what becomes of their solemnity? And what guarantee have you they are not

teaching heresy and schism? My opinion is that you will find these schools nurseries of separatists."

"But mothers have to teach, Uncle Fyford," I said.

"Then let mothers teach, my dear," he replied, "the clergy, and parents, are undeniable authorities. Indeed, the more I think of it the more it seems to me a decidedly dangerous disturbance of the designs of Providence."

"But you cannot teach all the children, Uncle Fyford, and the mothers don't. If we only taught them the Catechism and a little of the Bible, it could hardly be heresy; could it? We can send them to say the Catechism and their texts to you when they know them."

"Thank you, my dear. But really I am not used to children, and the duties of my office are onerous enough already."

"We thought so, uncle. And so, you will let us try and help you a little? Perhaps you would even set us a few lessons? Or you will examine the children, and give the prizes, if they deserve any?"

"My dear, lessons for little children are really not in my way." If you do indeed keep to the Catechism and the Bible—the Gospels—I should say, I daresay, after all, you will not go far wrong.

"You could always come and see us, you know, Uncle Fyford. And if you can only grant us the

great favor we have to ask you, we shall be within easy reach. We want the old room near the Abbey Gatehouse for our schoolroom to begin with."

"My dear, it is a den of rubbish."

But he went with us, and soon his constructive mind was quite interested in the capabilities of the place, which we, with Dick's aid, had previously critically explored. There were blocked up windows which could easily be opened; and with a little boarding for the floor, and a little repairing of the roof, a fire-place, and a few benches and books, a desk and a bell, our preparations would soon be complete.

"Well, I suppose I cannot refuse you, Bride," he said, half good-humoredly and half resentfully. "Your 'Rights of Man' perverted you to getting your own way too long ago. But it is rather a pity I did not make the discovery before. It would have made an excellent museum for my Coleoptera. The scheme is certainly Utopian. But perhaps the world is a little better on the whole for some people having, or having had, Utopian schemes."

Mr. Rabbidge looked on the whole experiment from a high and philosophical point of view.

"My dear young lady," he said, pointing to several shelves of those ponderous folios, in which to him the delights of possession and of perpetual search were blended, "look at those venerable volumes. They represent the theological re-

searches of the wisest men of many centuries. Each of them imagined he had reached a conclusion on which Christendom might repose, and be at accord. And you see Christendom is not at repose or at accord. And you hope to make all this plain to babes in a few broken hours! It does sound a little chimerical."

"But, Mr. Rabbidge," I said, "the babes have to grow up and to be good, if they can. And we cannot wait until the folios are finished, and Christendom is at repose, can we, to try and help them?"

"Theology is a difficult science for young ladies to handle," he replied, "although it is one which every tinker used to think he could fathom, and which, for the feminine mind, seems to possess irresistible attractions."

"We do not want to teach them theology, if that means the contents of all those folios," I said, "I am sure. How can we dream of such a thing? We want to teach them something about Christianity; how God has loved us, and how we can show our love to Him."

"Christianity also is a large word, Miss Bride," he said, "and has many aspects. This scheme, I repeat, seems to me a little chimerical. Moreover, I confess I consider it rather an interference with the order of nature to take the children from their parents for religious instruction. But I have no doubt it will do the babes good to be an hour or two every Sunday with you and your brother.

And," he added pathetically, "I hope you will find the instruction of youth an easier avocation than I have."

Miss Felicity's opposition was more immovable. "What are parents for," said she, "if they are not to teach their children religion? And what are Sundays for if they are not to give poor working people one day to spend with their families? I consider the plan at once Jacobinical and tyrannical, upsetting parental authority, and intruding on family life. Depend upon it, the poor children will learn two things in your Sunday-schools, to despise their parents and to dress like their betters. And meantime you set the mothers free to idle and gossip away the day as they like. If you want to teach any one, teach the mothers to mend the rags, not to gossip and scold, and to keep their homes tidy."

My father undertook our defence on this occasion.

"Miss Felicity, you would scarcely set Bride to teach the mothers as they are. And in teaching the children you know she is teaching the fathers and mothers that are to be. Let us hope the Sunday-schools will succeed so well that in the next generation none will be wanted." A hope which did not seem as Utopian to us in those days as it does now.

Thus even so humble and peaceful a mode of reformation as Sunday-schools was begun "against the stream."

In the town opinions were divided. Fortunately our family was too well known for us to be suspected, as Mrs. Hannah More had been a few years before in a similar undertaking at Cheddar, of seeking to "entrap the children in order to sell them as slaves." Nor did our fame, or the extent of our operations, expose us to the self-contradictory charges brought against her of "disaffection against Church and State," of "abetting sedition," of "praying for the success of the French," and of "being paid by Mr. Pitt."

Moreover, Mrs. Hannah More and her generous sisters were pioneers, and the success of her labors, closely following those of Mr. Raikes and others, had made Sunday-schools appear rather less of an extravagance. I often think that perhaps those self-denying and calumniated labors among the "actual savages" of the Mendips, may outlive all those books of hers which were welcomed with a chorus of adulation by bishops, priests, and statesmen. "*Aut Morus aut angelus*" might be written with more permanent letters on these than (as they were) by Bishop Porteus on her "Estimate of the Religion of the Fashionable World."

In our part of the country, moreover, the Wesleyans had been at work for fifty years, and the discovery of the treasures contained in the Bible had inspired hundreds and thousands of our west country miners and laborers with the determination to learn to read it. Convince any body of

people that there is something infinitely well worth reading, and they will find some way to learn how to read. Let any number of people have something worth writing, friends who care to be written to, and the means of communication, and they will learn to write.

The religious revival among the people of England came before the educational movement, and gave it at once its stimulus and its food. Our educational aspirations indeed were of the most moderate. Hannah More herself entirely disclaimed the idea of teaching the poor to write. "She had no intention," she apologetically assured one of her episcopal correspondents, "of raising the poor above their station."

And we had decidedly no presumptuous intentions of surpassing Mrs. More. Indeed we were not attempting week-day schools at all. The body of religious literature with which we began was not ambitious—Mrs. Hannah More's "Church Catechism, broken into short questions," the New Testament and the Prayer-Book, a spelling-book, and Watts's Hymns for Infant Minds: pictures we did not possess.

But it was a great innovation; and our dear old England, conservative to the tips of her fingers in those Jacobinical days, did suspect us very much, and resentfully wonder what new-fangled treason we were plotting at Abbot's Weir.

Of the two "vested interests" we had to contend with, the parents and the Dames of the day-

schools, the parents were divided, and not inaccessible in a slow way to conviction; but the Dames naturally were unanimous and entirely immovable. They said the gentry were going to take their bread out of their mouths, and put grand empty words into the mouths of the children. In vain we protested that we did not mean to interfere with one of their schools, but only to keep the children in order for them. The Dames were wiser in their generation than we were. They said we should make the children discontented with them, and no one could say where it would end. Education, they felt, and felt very sagaciously, as a means of maintenance for superannuated old women, would pass away, if it was to be regarded primarily, not with reference to old women, but with reference to the children to be educated. As in so many reforms, the people to be reformed saw more clearly whither these reforms tended than the reformers.

The West Indian planters foresaw the emancipation of the slaves, when the abolitionists only intended the extinction of the slave-trade.

The Dames of Abbot's Weir beheld in agonized vision vistas of day-schools—Lancastrian, British, National—and the abolition of Dames—while we only contemplated gathering a few children together on Sundays to teach them the Sermon on the Mount, Watts's hymns, and the Catechism.

In one sense the opponents of Hannah More were not so far wrong. The germs of a Revolu-

tion lay awaiting development, in the first of Mr. Raikes's Sunday-schools.

The Dames, therefore, were naturally implacable. And looking back, in my heart I pity them more, certainly, than we did at the time. The gradual passing away of one industry after another by which poor bereaved toiling women could, by work in their homes, keep their homes together, has its darkly pathetic side. And after half a century of experience, the article manufactured in our wholesale national schools is not altogether so satisfactory as to bear no competition.

If Dames could be rendered efficient, I am inclined to believe girls at all events would be more effectively taught the things best worth a woman's learning, in small individual clusters than in great roughly classified crowds.

And if fathers and mothers could or would teach their children at home, I am sure no Sunday-school could or can compare with the moral and spiritual results of such home teaching.

But these two *ifs* involve the Golden age.

However, these considerations make me more tolerant to the Dames and the Parents of Abbot's Weir, looking back from my old age than I was at the time in my sanguine youth.

"Utopia!" What was there impossible in Utopia?

Piers and I, and Amice, and Reuben Pengelly, in that little school in the old abbey gatehouse, and the rest of us throughout England, were unsealing

a fountain which was to rise, and spread, and float Abbot's Weir and England above all the rugged Ararats in the world, and begin a new era!

And the fountain of great waters did rise and did float England, as I believe, above many a peril, although that

" Divine event
For which the whole creation waits "

seems scarcely yet in sight.

Meantime the war with the Dames waxed hot. The Dames moyed the grandmothers in general, and the grandmothers moved the mothers; and I scarcely know how it would have fared with us if Reuben had not adopted the Machiavelian policy of subsidizing the most intelligent and indignant of the Dames, the one who could read and write, to take charge of the babies in church. It was, Amice protested, an infant sacrifice to Moloch, for she declared that subdued sounds of woe, as from pinched and cuffed infants surreptitiously pinched during the singing of the Psalms, issued from the dame's charge. But the stratagem answered. A split was created in the hostile cabinet. The babies grew up; in due time the dame grew too feeble or too mild to pinch, and the subsequent babies were mercifully suffered to sleep on warm afternoons, if they did it quietly.

Our beginnings, as in most undertakings that live, were small. We started with five teachers and ten children.

The mothers brought the little ones, and left

them, not without anxious exhortations to us, and many encouragements to the children. They evidently regarded it as a loan in concession to some fancy of ours, for which the subjects deserved compensation.

One woman only addressed her exhortations to the child, and her encouragements to us.

"If you can make anything of he, Miss Bride, it's more than his father or me can, or the dame, and sure enough, you're right welcome to him."

A challenge which greatly stimulated our ambition.

A beginning was all that was needed.

Amice, herself permitted to come only under a kind of commission of lunacy (Madam Glanvil protesting that the world being turned crazy, it was as well to encourage the least frantic of its delusions), took the youngest class, the babies, as we called them, although we had none under five. She said to me that the babies suited her and her theology best, and as by-and-by she hoped to have to do with the lowest class, the children among the races, it was the best training for her.

She painted them Bible pictures, she brought them flowers, she taught them in parables, and they certainly heard her gladly. Her class was the most popular of all. The difficulty was to get any one to grow out of it.

Yet more than one darling little one did grow out of it into higher teaching than ours. Infant

epidemics carried off far more in those days than now.

In long after years reminiscences would be brought out to me, by mothers, of little hymns and sacred sayings of some lost darling, and of the name of Jesus, blended by infant lips with that of "mother," and of "Miss Amice," as of One nearer, and dearer, and kinder, and better than all, to whom it was nothing strange or sad to go.

And more than that, the hymns and texts the little ones had loved would be spelt over by lips and hearts often as simple, though not, indeed, as innocent, as theirs; and rough men would come to be taught the way the little lost child had found so pleasant, and to tread it, pleasant or hard, so as it led where they were gone.

Claire did not join us, but she sought out many a stray lamb to send to us.

The elder class fell to me; and many a lesson I learned in trying to teach them; among them, a greater allowance for my stepmother and Miss Felicity, and a general appreciation of the difficulties of teachers and parents, ministers, pastors, and masters, and all governing persons; many a lesson also as to the defectibility of my own temper, and the fallibility and general vagueness of my own knowledge.

For if there is no flattery so delicious as the attention of children, it is just because they are quite incapable of the flattery of pretending to

attend when they are not interested, or of pretending to understand when they do not, or of accepting a rhetorical paraphrase instead of a clear explanation.

The school soon grew, so that we had to transfer the boys to one of the large workshops at the Foundry.

The girls soon became at home with me, as the lads did with Piers. They knew us already on so many sides, and we knew them.

Anice and Piers and I found that we had to study the histories of the Bible in quite a new way, to make them real to our pupils, and to study the outer and inner world, nature and life, anew, to transfuse Christianity through them.

And so, if we and our friends did not altogether make a new era in England or Abbot's Weir, the little Sunday-school certainly made a new era for us, and I trust for not a few who came to it.





CHAPTER XXVI.

THROUGHOUT the winter of 1801, and the spring of 1802, the enthusiasm with which the people had welcomed the peace with France had been slowly cooling.

By March, 1802, when the "Definitive Treaty" of Amiens was announced, all idea of the peace being definitive had begun to fade away.

The most immovable of Tories in those dreary days had the best of it in prognostication. Those whose hopes of human progress had been largest and most enduring, had to confess themselves most deluded. But few kept hold, through those terrible years of the failure of freedom and the triumph of falsehood, of "blood and fire, and vapor of smoke," in which the last century set and the present rose, at once of faith in freedom and of trust in the loving rule of God.

This world for Napoleon Bonaparte, and the next for justice, and the just, seemed as much as the hopefulness of any could grasp.

To my uncle Fyford and Madam Glanvil, indeed, the question was entirely without clouds.

"The French had given themselves up to the devil," said Madam Glanvil, "and the devil had been sent them in the person of Napoleon Bonaparte. It was quite clear, and all fair; at least as regarded the French. And it would be quite clear for us if we did not resist the devil, that is, fight the French, as the Bible told us."

My uncle Fyford, in more clerical and classical language, observed, "The democracy of Paris has gone the way of all democracies—run to seed in despotism. If the democracy and the despotism are not to become universal, William Pitt and England will have to crush them."

France began to be embodied to us in the terrible form of the Corsican, terribly rising and growing gigantic before the eyes of the Democracy that had evoked, and could not banish it. And, instinctively, England began to look around for some one princely will to encounter the foe.

Men began to feel bad weather was ahead, and to ask, like St. Christopher, for "the strongest, that they might obey him."

"*Il parle en roi*," said our ambassador, the Marquis of Cornwallis, writing of Napoleon from Paris. There was no trace of Jacobinism in the new French constitution. No government could be more despotic. Also there was a concordat arranged by Napoleon between France and the Pope.

"Royalty without loyalty;" Madame des Ormes said, "and religion without faith! The

republic was bad, but this vulgar new pomp, how can any one bear it?"

Englishmen and Englishwomen in those first months of peace flocked to Paris, the Paris which since Englishmen saw it last had guillotined her king and queen, devoured brood after brood of her Revolution, deluged her own streets, and Europe, with the best blood of France, adored the goddess of reason, established *tutoy*-ing and the abolition of all titles, and now again was commanding men and women to call each other *Madame* and *Monsieur* (*Madame* being politely restored many months before *Monsieur*), nay, was even said to be rising to the height of *Monseigneur* and *Votre Altesse*, and secretly preparing the Temple to Cæsar in which her offerings for so many generations were to be laid.

Madame said mournfully, "All can go back to France except her own children. And yet what should we find there? Scarcely even ruins; they will be buried under the new constructions. Yet I would give something for tidings of our old *terres* and the peasantry. The chateau is gone, and the lands are confiscated; but I think the people—some of them—would remember us affectionately."

After that Piers began to think of an expedition to Paris. He set his whole heart on it, I could see, although he spoke little.

But to us the year 1802 was full of many events which prevented his departure.

The timber trade had been much disturbed by the war; my father had lost more than one cargo by privateers. Not a few of our merchants had effected a kind of Lynch law insurance by taking shares in privateers, paying themselves for piracies by robbing some one else. But this my father would never do. Piers, therefore, was peculiarly unwilling to ask him to incur any additional expense for him.

Moreover, Francis went to Oxford that year, which had involved many expenses, and among others the clearing out of Piers' and my purses, to clear off all the various small debts he had contracted in the town.

Piers hoped that an entirely fresh start and the relief which he imagined it must be to any one to have the burden of debt altogether lifted off, would be the best possible chance for Francis's turning over a new leaf.

Francis himself, of course, was completely of the same opinion. He seemed for once really grateful.

"It was more than brotherly," he said, "and he should never forget it."

He acceded with fervor to Piers' declaration that this help was the very last secret help he would give. He admitted with decision that a young man at the university was in a totally different position from a lad at school, and must of necessity be a totally different being. "Besides, his allowance was ample, his outfit most elaborate

—he never could want anything beyond.” He smiled at Piers’ apprehensions. “In fact, although he did not like to promise too much, he intended that neither Piers nor I should in the end be losers by our most generous conduct.”

So the summer passed, without Piers seeing any means of accomplishing his journey.

But in our little circle at Abbot’s Weir one act of Napoleon wrought more indignation than any besides. This was his expedition to restore slavery in St. Domingo.

All the previous winter Loveday Benbow had been watching with the deepest interest the movements of Toussaint L’Ouverture and his black republic in Hayti.

She thought, with thousands besides in England, that at last the despised negro race was about to manifest its capabilities. It was true that the supremacy of the whites had not been overthrown without bloodshed. This was to dear peace-loving Loveday the only doubtful feature. But if ever war was justifiable, it was to rescue the feeble and oppressed from slavery; if Leonidas and Wilhelm Tell were heroes, Toussaint L’Ouverture’s banner was at least as pure.

The negro government once established, all seemed going on peaceably and justly. The trust of the liberated negro in liberated France, liberator of nations, is as affecting to look back on as the betrayed confidence of a child.

Looking back also, we can see that the whole

movement was only too childlike; the reverence of the long oppressed for the ability of the dominant white race only too great, the copying too exact.

France had a republic, and permitted no title but citizen. Toussaint and St. Domingo must therefore have a republic, and the *ci-devant* slaves own no dignity beyond that of citizen. Poor blind copies of what was in itself a poor parody of the institutions of grand old times and grand old races, without significance or foundation. Citizens who had been trained in no civic rights, had no civic life, indeed, no civilization except the thinnest crust of French polish!

Then France instituted a First Consul. Immediately, Toussaint L'Ouverture proclaimed himself First Consul, and wrote to the First Consul (intending it as a compliment), "*The first of the Blacks to the first of the Whites.*"

Napoleon responded by a sarcasm, and an army. "*He would not have military honors assumed,*" he said "*by apes and monkeys.*"

It is easy to see now how thin and imitative that black republic was; but its very childishness only makes its history in some ways more pathetic. To us, then, fondly catching at any sign of capability in our poor blacks, it seemed like the inauguration of a new era.

Cousin Harriet wrote enthusiastically from Clapham. "Some people," she said, "thought Toussaint L'Ouverture was inaugurating a new era, not

only for the negroes and the West Indies, but for the Church and the world. Some one had said that the negro race would probably commence a new age of Christianity. The Eastern Churches had had their age of subtle thought and elaborate dogma, and the Latin and German races had shown the strength and ability of man. The negro race might be destined to manifest his gentler virtues; to develop on earth for the first time the sublime and lowly morality of the Sermon on the Mount. Greeks had taught us how to think, Romans how to fight, negroes would teach us how to suffer and to forgive."

It was a golden vision.

Only, as Amice suggested and Loveday mournfully admitted, they had not exactly begun in San Domingo with forgiving. However, the forgiving might no doubt come afterwards.

Madam Glanvil was naturally much irritated at the whole thing.

She was almost reconciled to Napoleon for characterizing the negro republicans as "apes." "Apes and monkeys they were," said she, "only he might have carried the comparison a little further home. The French aped the Greeks and Romans, Brutus and his assassins, and now they seemed likely to ape Cæsar, and more successfully; and the blacks aped the French. There was a difference; the French did it better. But apes they were, all alike."

Indeed Madam Glanvil had difficulty at times

in not taking Napoleon Bonaparte as her hero. They had many points in common.

To her the great authorization of the "powers that be" is that they be powers. Had Napoleon been a Bourbon, she said, there would have been no revolution. In his sarcasms against the republican theorists she greatly rejoiced.

His "*Je ne veux point d'idéologues*" expressed her convictions better than any formula previously invented.

She was not a little inclined to agree with him, that the swallowing up of Piedmont and the Valais were "*deux misérables bagatelles*," not worth our disturbing ourselves about.

If he would have let England alone, she would have willingly consented to leaving the rest of the world, black and white, alone with him.

"Those foreigners" she said, "will never understand either loyalty or liberty, or a constitution. Some one is sure to tyrannize over them and make them uncomfortable. What does it matter who?"

But England was rising slowly to another mind.

In the spring of 1802 my cousins wrote me again, mentioning the threatened French expedition against San Domingo. "Can you believe it?" they said. "English merchants have been base enough to assist in it with transports. Mr. Wilberforce remonstrated in the House of Commons; but Mr. Addington responded very languidly. Papa says we must have Mr. Pitt back, or everything will be lost—honor, commerce, ne-

groes, and England." They said there must be meetings everywhere; the people everywhere must be roused and instructed. They only needed to know.

"Could you not get up a meeting in Abbot's Weir for the abolition of the slave trade?"

It was so easy to get up meetings at Clapham. My cousins had no idea what a difficult thing they were proposing.

Father said of course we could.

Piers said then of course we *would*.

I felt ashamed of myself. I had thought so much of self-denials and tests of the reality of conviction, as a little deficient at Clapham; and here, at last, came a test, and I shrank back from it.

For an anti-slavery meeting presided over, as it must be, by my father, meant, to me, banishment from Court; and, to Amice, I knew not what, of perplexity and trial.

I dared not say anything for or against. I only told Amice; and she, after a pause, said what I knew she would say.

"It must be done, Bride. You must do it, and you and I must bear it. Think," she added, "if it was only the least little push onward to the lifting off of the terrible wrong! What does it matter what little trials we have to suffer? The wrong is there, the sin is there, the suffering is there, and that *is* the trial."

So I wrote, by my father's desire, to Cousin Crichton to say we would do all we could—receive

the deputation, take the room, advertise the meeting, and explain its intention.

The year wore on. The French expedition reached San Domingo in February.

The reduction of the emancipated negroes to slavery was too plainly its object. Toussaint L'Ouverture and all the blacks understood it, and made a determined resistance; not in vain, as a proof of what negroes well led could do, but necessarily in vain as to success against the veteran brigades of the French Republic; for the Frenchmen they encountered were veterans, and were Republicans. The First Consul was believed to have a double object in view in this expedition; to re-enslave the Black race, and to dispose of some troublesome Republican troops, which might be too austere to bend to his imperial purpose.

In the last object he succeeded completely. About fifty thousand French soldiers were slain in the conflicts with the blacks, or perished of disease between February, 1802, and December, 1805. In the second object he succeeded but imperfectly. Toussaint L'Ouverture, the noblest and ablest of the blacks, brave and not unmerciful; with his determination to liberate his own race, and his noble readiness to learn of the white race, whose superiority he acknowledged, was entrapped by false promises, and sent to France to die of starvation. But the negroes continued the resistance under more savage leaders; and in the end the last French general, Ferrand, abandoned

by France, blew out his brains "in despair," the Spaniards recovered the island, and slavery was established.

In August, Toussaint L'Ouverture was thrown into the Prison of the Temple in Paris, thence transferred to the fortress of Joux, in a ravine of the Jura; the victim we all felt of too frank a trust in the honor of the white men he believed in, yet had dared, and dared successfully, to resist.

The lull of the parliamentary anti-slavery conflict, which had lasted since Mr. Wilberforce's defeat in 1799, continued. All the more important was it that the struggle should not be suffered to be forgotten in the country, and the campaign be carried on in detail. Accordingly our anti-slavery meeting in Abbot's Weir could not be deferred.

My cousins wrote of it with enthusiasm. They considered it quite a fresh launch for Abbot's Weir. Cousin Crichton himself was to come down to assist. At last, in October, the fatal day arrived.

Large handbills had been posted on various friendly walls and gates for a fortnight. The old town-crier had rung his bell and sounded his "Oyez!" although that was by no means an effective way of trumpeting any fact. The room over the market-house had been engaged.

Still Madam Glanvil had not apprehended the event which both Amice and I believed would

involve a sentence of banishment from Court, for me and mine.

The meeting was fixed for Monday. On the Saturday before Amice and I had a long walk in the woods of Court, the brown carpet of fallen leaves rustling under our feet, the gold and crimson canopy of fading leaves above our heads growing into a fine network, through which the blue sky shone on us; while below the river rolled with its full autumn volume of sound. For some time I had avoided dining or spending the day in the house; nor had Amice pressed it. We felt it would have been a kind of treason to Madam Glanvil. Indeed, it was hard to know how far we ought to tell her what was intended.

Our hearts were very heavy. Amice and I had often an opposite feeling as to the sympathy of nature. To-day this was especially the case.

To me there seemed a deathlike weight on all the woods. The birds we startled flew with an uneasy cry from us like creatures who had no home to fly to. The river rolled sullenly on. Even the green fronds of the ferns were hidden under the withered and sodden leaves. Everything spoke of joys, and hopes, and life vanished. The very pomp was funereal. So often we had wandered about those woods together, free and glad; and now we only seemed to creep through them like trespassers.

I was very sad; and it seemed to me, in my

childishness, all nature was sad too. But Amice entirely rejected the idea of such sympathy.

“Nature is too old and wise to mewl and puke with her children like that,” said she. “And she is also too grand and far-seeing. Our mother, if you choose to call her so, is a queen. She has her kingdom to care for, and if now and then she gives a kiss or a smile to our little miseries, it is all we can expect of her. She has seen so many such breakings of hearts healed. She is too stately and too busy, to heed our complainings overmuch. She knows nothing of death and parting. She only knows death as a phase of life. The dead leaves and flowers are dear to her as the cradle of next year’s leaves and flowers. If they were dead trees or forests she would not care more. She would wear them down into mould for new trees and forests, or perhaps into bogs and coal-mines. Nothing comes amiss to her. The war and torture even among her animals do not disturb her. She is very stately and philosophical, even if she does not enjoy it; like a matron of old Rome at the gladiatorial sights. She is healthy, and has strong nerves. And to imagine she would look downcast because you and I do not know what trouble to-morrow may bring!”

We went home by the kitchen garden. We had determined to spend our half hour at the window-seat in Amice’s bedroom. All kinds of first things came into our memory, as so often happens,

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We passed the old damp mouldy arbor.

“Do you remember your portrait, Amice, the crocus bulb feeling for something to root itself in?”

“And do you remember,” she replied, “putting your arm around me, and half sobbing, ‘You mean *me*, Amice?’ so surprised and glad you were! and then half sadly, ‘only *me*—what am I?’”

I remembered.

“We have learned that *only me* would not quite do, Bride. Only One will do to rest one’s whole heart in. But your *only me* has been no little help. Ah, Bride, for how many years!”

We went up to her room, hers and once her great-aunt Prothessea’s. We sat on the low window-seat, and she read to me two stanzas of one of the German hymns:—

“Du bist der Hirt der Schwache trägt
Aux Dich will ich mich legen,
Du bist der Arzt der Kranke pflegt
Erquicke mich mit Segen.
Ich bin in Wahrheit schwach und siech
Ach komm verbind’ und heile mich
Und pflege den Elenden.”

“The Shepherd who carries the weak, and strengthens them by carrying,” she said. And then rising into a more joyous strain, she began:—

“Nun ich will mit Freuden
Schen was Er thut
Wie er mich wird ansehen
Weil er doch nicht ruht

Bis er mir kann halten
Seinen theuren Eid,
Dass ich noch soll werden
Seine ganze Freud."

"No," she said, with a quiet triumph in her deep tones. "He will not rest, until to us, even to us, He fulfils his dear oath, that we, even we, shall become through and through, altogether a joy, even to Him."

We sat some minutes silent, hand in hand, while through the open window came the colors of the autumn sunset, and the murmur of the river, and now and then a quiet song of a robin.

"Listen!" she said, "I will call nature no more irreverent names. She sings all through our sorrows, as the robin sings through the cold, as the white-robed multitudes in the Revelation sing on the Hallelujah, and "again they cry Hallelujah," through all the tumult of earth. She sings because she sees a hand within, an end beyond, a Face above. Or if she does not, we do, Bride! We see, and at all events, through all, we will sing. Some sighing, I think, is singing; and some silence is better, when patience and hope, who never seem long far apart from each other, make melody in the heart."





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CHAPTER XXVII.

WHEN I returned from Court that Saturday evening Cousin Crichton had arrived.

He was one of those people to whom his own favorite epithet, "sound," applied in every possible way. Health, heart, purse, judgment, doctrine, all with him were sound; not a flaw anywhere, nor an angle to make flaws in other people's health, persons, or hearts; his round, sound, solid personality made the world around him seem more solid and better balanced, as if it had another broad-shouldered Atlas to bear it up.

Every one was in the state drawing-room. The amber furniture was uncovered. Mrs. Danescombe, encompassed with crust after crust of clothes and conventionalities, a new tiara with an erect feather, a new silk that would "stand alone," and looked as if it would have liked it better. My father a little like an exiled potentate, as he always was in the amber drawing-room, trying to feel at home, and as little able to do it as the chairs placed at irregular angles with an elaborate pro-

tence of being acenstomed to be sat upon. And Cousin Crichton beaming with kind intentions and hospitality *in esse* or *in posse*, rubbing his hands with that effusive manner which always gave him the effect of being everybody's host; elaborately making the very best of Abbot's Weir, the narrow streets, the little houses, our church, our hills, our old grey tower and chimes, in a way which gave one the impression that he was perpetually apologizing to Clapham for having been born in so insignificant a corner; sanguine about the abolition meeting, about the peace, about everything, and yet all the while one could not but feel liable in the most placid manner, at every turn, to tread on all the uncomfortable toes of Abbot's Weir, as unconsciously as if Abbot's Weir had no toes to be trodden on.

"Well, Bride," he said, kissing me and laughingly rubbing his hands, "my fair Trappist, have you forgiven us yet for being so 'terribly rich' at Clapham?"

My stepmother looked—petrified I cannot say, since the word represented rather her usual manner—she looked as if she were going back from a fossil to a living madrepore, cold and gelatinous. Could I have said anything so rustic, so vulgar, so presumptuous?

"You have all but perverted your cousin Harriet into a reformer," he said. "I am half afraid of her going into bread and water, or Quaker bonnets, or starting off for the Indies, East or West.

She does not seem able by any means to make herself as uncomfortable as she would like."

"Cousin Harriet to the Indies?" I said. "Is she to be married?"

"Quite the contrary," he replied; "unless she can find some one poor enough to make her as uncomfortable as she would wish. Seriously, Bride, she is a dear, good girl, but just a little wild about the prisons and the slaves, and the missionaries, and everybody's wrongs and rights. At last, you know, the Church of England has sent to the heathen not only the money you so magnificently despise, but a *man*, a Senior Wrangler. Henry Martyn (one of our West-country men, by-the-by) has given up the best career in England to devote himself to the conversion of the Hindoos. At last we have sent one of our highest; not a German, nor a shoemaker, nor a Separatist of any kind, but a first-class university man, and a sound English Churchman. But Harriet seems most inclined to the Moravians. I believe, if I would allow her, she would go to-morrow to teach slave children in one of the Moravian settlements in Antigua."

A thought flashed on me, and with it a pang. Could it be that this was another cord being woven into the net which I was so afraid would at last sweep away Amice from me?

The next day was Sunday. After the afternoon service Cousin Crichton asked which was Madam Glanvil. He had pleasant recollections of shooting over the covers of Court. He was anx

ious to see the lady of the manor ; the earliest state ceremonial he could remember being Madam Glanvil's triumphal entry, as a blooming bride, with the young Squire, into Abbot's Weir, under arches of flowers, with the old bells elashing cannons, and ringing joyous peals ; the tenants and townsmen hurraing, and the boys, himself among the number, indulged in an unlimited allowance of noise.

He had no idea in what a hostile form he was now entering Madam Glanvil's principality. The coach was at the church door before we had finished our inspection of various old family monuments and tablets of our own.

We came out at the old Lych gate just as the two black footmen were drawn up in the usual form to usher Madam Glanvil into the coach. But there was a variety in the ceremonial, to me terribly significant. Amice, instead of lingering behind, as usual, for a greeting from my father, was marshalled before her grandmother, who followed her without turning round for the imperial but friendly Jupiter nod with which she usually favored us. For a moment I caught sight of Amice's face leaning eagerly forward, and looking very pale. In another moment, by a stormy flash from Madam Glanvil's steel-grey eyes, I saw that her *not seeing* us was positive, not negative. Then the blind was drawn violently down, the footmen sprang up behind, and the horses pranced demonstratively away.

By this I knew that Madam Glanvil had heard

of the abolition meeting, and that sentence had gone forth between us and Amice.

"I thought Miss Glanvil was your greatest friend, Bride?" Cousin Crichton said.

"She was," I almost gasped, my heart beating violently; "she is, she always will be."

He looked amused at the solemnity and terseness of my protest.

"Preoccupied to-day?"

"It is the abolition meeting," my father interposed.

"Ah, I remember. Her father was a West India planter. The young lady has slave property. I see."

"Indeed, Cousin Crichton," I said, "you don't see! She is more fervent for abolition—for emancipation—than any one. We can all talk. That is easy enough. But she *suffers*."

"The old lady does not approve?"

"Approve!" I said. That mild phrase applied to Madam Glanvil's sentiments, indicated the depth of Cousin Crichton's want of comprehension. "She is furious, mad, against it, against missionaries, against philanthropy, against Clapham, against everyone and everything that dares touch on the subject."

"Ah!" said genial Cousin Crichton, "very unpleasant for the poor girl! But not even fathers or mothers, much less grandmothers, must stand in the way. It is written, we all know, 'Cut off the right hand,' 'Pluck out the right eye.'"

"*Unpleasant!*" yes I should think it would be unpleasant for Amice! In the bitterness of my heart I said to myself that unpleasantness was the sharpest form of martyrdom Clapham knew, or chose to know in its own person. The plucking out of the right eye, being so rich, it naturally paid to have done by proxy—by Germans, Methodists, Baptist shoemakers. I was as unjust to prosperous Clapham as Madam Glanvil. Talking was so easy; and yet to me the talking to-morrow evening would actually be cutting off the right hand. My only consolation was to go and sit with Loveday. She knew, at all events, something of what right hands and right eyes meant; although for her, dear soul, the crushing and cutting had been done by an irresistible Hand, and had only been made her own act by acquiescence.

She was resting on the long cushioned window-seat, beside her a little table with a nosegay of flowers from the conservatories at Court. Amice sent one, or when she could, brought it, every Saturday.

She had brought that yesterday.

That little trifling token of kindness melted me out of my lofty heroics. I burst into tears, and pointing to the flowers said,—

"Oh, Loveday! It is the last! She will never bring them again."

Loveday started.

"Amice ill?" she said. "What has happened? My dear, I am afraid my deafness increases, I am so stupid. I must have heard wrong."

"No," I sobbed. "The meeting; the meeting to-morrow! She was not allowed to speak to us to-day."

Loveday leant back. Her lips quivered a little, but instead of tears came that smile of hers which was like music.

"It is beginning, dear child," she said. "*At last it is beginning!*" taking my hand. "You know it must have come. And she is ready. It has not come before she was quite ready."

"But I am not ready!" I said.

"No; naturally. We never are ready for our dearest to suffer. Therefore the cup is not in our hands."

"But not to stand by her! Not to be able to help her in the least!"

"You can help her, Bride. You know how. And the bitter cup itself will help her more. It is good, Bride, it is God's best to give us to drink ever so little of the cup He drank of; the cup itself strengthens, Bride," she said, with the conviction of one who has tasted. "After so many thousand years, do you think the Master does not know how to mix the bitter herbs?"

The Anti-Slave-Trade Meeting was not impressive as to quality or quantity, "rank or fashion;" no chariots as at Freemasons' Hall, no titles, clerical or lay.

We had one clergyman, a young man recently appointed to one of the parishes bordering on the

Moor. Shy, he looked, and gentle, and rather overwhelmed by the prominence that had to be given to him. We had our one physician, and much to Dr. Kenton's credit it was that he came, running counter by that act to the prejudices of Miss Felicity and of his patroness Madam Glanvil. Madam Glanvil, indeed, had never been known to be in need of a physician. But in attending this evening Dr. Kenton must have counted the cost to science and to himself, and must have known that whatever happened in the future, he abandoned the inmates of Court to being systematically "lowered" into the grave.

There were several small tradesmen attending at some risk of loss; there was one Methodist farmer, brought by John Wesley's "Thoughts on Slavery;" there were numbers of mechanics and laborers, many of them from our foundry and timber-yard; and there were all our Sunday-school children—the boys very impressive in stamping applause, when they understood it was allowed.

My father took the chair. The forms of "moving and seconding" seemed like parodies in that confidential little gathering. But Cousin Crichton was rigid in his adherence to them.

It seemed scarcely worth while to have summoned Cousin Crichton from London, and to have severed such ties, just to spread a little information among a few people, all of whom we knew, and to whom we could say so much more in confidence any day!

At least my cowardly heart said so.

But might not the same be said of all symbols? Was there not a moment in life when two people clasping hands before a few others meant union for life and death? Were not nearly all the testing acts of life from the first, recorded, in themselves mere trifles, such as the plucking of one fruit?

Had there not been a moment when the future of the world depended on a hundred and twenty men and women, most of them poor and unlettered, meeting together in an upper chamber to confess that they believed One to be alive who was said to be dead, and waited for some gift He had promised?

Poor little meeting in the Abbot's Weir market-room! It meant something, perhaps, even above. It symbolized enough indeed to me.

But just as my father was beginning his speech one figure quietly entered, and remained just inside the door, whose arrival took away all doubt as to the significance of the symbol to me.

Veiled and cloaked as the figure was, I knew it at once. It was Amice Glanvil.

My father recognized her also. I knew by the little tremulousness in his voice.

An officious porter would have placed for her a chair of honor, but my father motioned him to be quiet.

She did not remain cloaked. As the speeches went on, she threw aside her cloak, and her hood

fell back unconsciously as she leant forward, listening, quite calm, and apparently seeing no one, but with a steady fire in her eyes.

I trembled, now, lest Cousin Orichton should say any severe indiscriminating things against the planters, as if they were all Neros, which she could not bear to hear.

But severity was not his weakness; and the audience was not impassioned enough to sweep an orator on into any wild statements.

Cousin Orichton began with praising everybody whom he could praise. And then a new and paralyzing fear came over me that he would round off a period with "heroic women forsaking their parents, and cutting off right hands." But happily either the bad light of our tallow candles saved him from the discovery, or his better genius interposed.

He much commended the shy young clergyman.

Conservative as he was, true to Church and King, Lords and Commons, and all the detail of our inimitable constitution, he confessed he regretted that in this instance the Upper House had scarcely taken the lead in good works as might have been hoped. The Bill for the abolition of the abominable trade had once passed the Commons, but never yet the Lords. We were told indeed that "not many noble" (in my presence he did not venture on the "not many rich"). "But he rejoiced to tell them—if they did not already

know—that among those doubly ennobled by being first in this noble cause were their own Earl and Countess of Abbot's Weir; and that one at least of the royal dukes, the Duke of Gloucester, was with us. (Prolonged cheers.)

“He would have been glad also, loyal as any man in England to his Church, if her ministers, or, at all events, her bishops, had led their flocks in this crusade. But the bishops, as a body, had not yet taken this position. Two of their number, however, were firm supporters—Bishop Porteus, of London, and Bishop Horsley, of St. Asaph's. The exceptional names deserved mention, much as one regretted their being exceptional.”

Then, with a tribute to the young Clergyman present, to John Wesley, to the Quakers, and to my father, each of which brought its meed of cheering, and gradually warmed the audience into a readiness to receive the facts he had to relate, he began the serious portion of his speech.

First of all the decrease instead of increase of the slave population through cruelty and toil, which was the originating cause of the Trade; the inciting of the natives of Africa to war, the kidnapping and packing in the hold of the ship, illustrated by a large copy of Mr. Clarkson's dreadful diagram; the statistics of death on the voyage. Thus, in a calm, English, business-like way, he went over the whole terribly familiar ground.

He would not dwell on isolated instances of excess or of cruelty. There was isolated excess in a

thousand directions, among our parish apprentices, among our seamen. It was the cruelty involved in the mildest form under the mildest task-master, owner or overseer, the cruelty *inevitable* in the traffic, on which he insisted. Unless the toil and the punishments in the plantations were such as to crush a race, a tropical race, it must be remembered, working in a climate congenial to them, the population would not have to be recruited from Africa, and the trade would not be needed. Unless a system of savage warfare, secret attacks, burning villages, kidnapping, and wrongs unutterable, were encouraged in Africa, the trade would not be possible.

Then he went into the history of the struggle, giving their due to John Woolman, Antony Benezet, Leonhard Dober, the Moravians and Wesleyans, and the American Quakers, and alluding to the labors of Granville Sharpe, Clarkson, and to the championship of Mr. Wilberforce, he concluded with a contrast between the professions of liberty, equality, and fraternity in France which had ended in this invasion of San Domingo and the imprisonment of Toussaint, the greatest negro, in the dungeon on the Jura—and the freedom based on a religion and a Constitution like our own; between the noisy explosion of revolution ending in despotism to the white, and slavery for the black, and the great patient struggle against wrong, carried on now from the Houses of Parliament to every corner of our country, and before long, as he believed, to end triumphantly; or, rather, as he dared to hope,

to begin a fresh era of conflict and victory, by the abolition of the slave trade.

And all the time I was listening, not in my own person, but in that of Amice Glanvil.

When Cousin Crichton closed, I ventured to steal another look at her face. It was full of a great joy, although I could see it was wet with tears.

The young clergyman pronounced a benediction. We sang the Doxology; and then the meeting broke up.

Amice caught my eye, and I rose instinctively to move towards her. But she looked very grave, shook her head, motioned me away, and in another moment, with her rapid movements, had cloaked herself, and disappeared from the room.

I was anxious how she would get home. But before I could say so, Piers had disappeared, and did not return among us until he had watched her safely inside the gate.

At the gate she turned and shook hands with him; but she said nothing.

And as Piers came back he met Reuben Pengelly on the same errand.

"Poor lamb!" said Reuben. "We say the words, but she has to carry the wood for the sacrifice."

I felt sure I understood what she meant. She would resist her grandmother's will for what she deemed a duty, a confession of the right. But she

would . . . by that means win for herself one moment of pleasant intercourse with us.

When should I know what or how she had suffered? Loveday said we did know how she endured, and that was much.

I knew sooner than I expected.

The next morning a letter came from Amice, saying, "I have told Granny I mean to see you, and to wish you good-bye. Come this afternoon to the old hollow trunk that hangs over the violet bank, by the river, just inside the gate. *It is begun*, Bride. I feel that my work, the work for me, has begun. And it will not be left unfinished."

When I came to the old trunk we had sat on so often, she was there. She took my hands and kissed them. I would have thrown my arms around her, but she would not have it.

"*I am one of them*, Bride," she said, "not by any condescension or sympathy, but really, literally, by *birthright*. Granny says my mother, my father's wife, was a slave. Therefore I have a right to care for them. You see I am scarcely myself free-born."

And as she said so her eyes kindled, her form rose into such a majesty, and her face so shone with the feeling and purpose of the soul, as to give one some conception of what might be meant by a "spiritual body." Free-born indeed she was; free-born in the old Teutonic sense, every inch and every thought of her *free*, that is, *noble*; posses-

sor of herself and of who could say what besides, free and royal as the heir of a hundred generations of royalty.

"Granny would never have told me," she said, "unless she had been beside herself with anger. And I believe she would give much to have the words unsaid. It happened in this way. It was on Sunday afternoon, as we drove to church. On a bit of old wall fronting the gate was one of the advertisements, and in the large letters, '*Anti-Slavery Meeting, Monday evening,*' and '*Piers Danescombe in the chair.*' She was there in the morning, but she had not seen it. Instantly she leant out of the window and stopped the carriage.

"Cato and Cæsar came to the window looking very conscious and sheepish.

"'Tear down that,' she said.

"She was too angry for epithets.

"The poor fellows tore the paper into shreds.

"'Take up the shreds,' said she, 'and carry them to Mr. Danescombe's counting-house to-morrow with my compliments, and tell him I shall prosecute with the utmost rigor of the law who ever dared to fix that vile trash on my walls. Now drive on.'

"Cato trembled, but I caught sight of a grin on Cæsar's face as he retired.

"'Now,' she said, turning to me, 'when did you know of this?'

"'Some weeks since,' I said.

"'And that little silky creature from the town

too,' said she. 'Fool that I was to expect more from *your mother's child*.'

"And in that frame of mind we entered the church.

"How we left it you know.

"As for me, I could not help being more than half on her side. How could it look to her, but as a long course of concealment? How could she understand all the reasons which made us feel it hopeless to tell her beforehand? her deafness, her imperiousness, the hopelessness of arguing with her, the impossibility of abandoning what we considered right.

"Before the evening I should have made a determined effort, and told her all I felt, cost her and me what it might; and it might have ended, after a storm, in our understanding each other better than before.

"But for those words, '*your mother's child!*' I think she would have withdrawn them if she could, and have concentrated her anger on you and your father. But she could not tear the words out of my heart; nor could I suffer all she said of you.

"I need not tell you that, Bride; it would be ungenerous and unjust. You know her; and how much, and how little, such words mean."

I knew, indeed, that Madam Glanvil did deal largely in superlatives, although not at all in the style of the superlatives of Clapham.

"However, she roused me beyond endurance.

I defended you—I could not help it—and said a thousand vehement things, which, of course, had a doubly vehement effect, shouted close to her ear. It is so difficult, under the calmest circumstances, to discuss anything with a deaf person without seeming in a passion.

“I said you and your father were the very soul of truth and honor.

“Then she turned on me and said again—

“She had been a fool to expose me to low hypocritical influences, but that no influence would ever have persuaded a true Glanvil to do what I had done. What could the *child of a slave* know of honor?”

“As usual, her own passionate words, once uttered, cooled her.

“She became reasonable, and would have softened them.

“‘I mean no insult to your mother or your poor father,’ she said. ‘She was a faithful wife and a good woman, they say, and her birth was not her own fault, however her beauty may have been his ruin. The misfortune was his, the fault was his, or her Spanish forefathers’, at whose door ‘it lies that these beautiful half-castes exist. I am sorry I said anything.’ (She was actually apologizing to me for my birth.) ‘Forget it, child. We will both forget and forgive. But never talk to me, and never expect me to tolerate one of that Danescombe set again.’

“And she did say very bitter and untrue things ;

more than I felt I ought to bear. I was perfectly calm then. And when I am quite calm I can always make Granny hear without shouting. I spoke quite slowly, so that she must hear, and I could see that she heard—

“First of all, naturally, I defended you ; and then I said, ‘Granny, I thank you more than I can say for what you have told me. For now my duty is clear. If my mother was a slave, the slaves are her kindred, and mine. I have a duty to her race and mine, not only because they are men and women—because God made them and our Lord redeemed them—but because they are *my mother’s people*. And in one way or another, I will devote myself, body, soul, and substance, to helping and serving them in every way I can, as long as I live.’

“She did not storm any more, poor Granny. She looked actually bewildered and frightened, and began to contradict herself.

“‘Your mother was not exactly a slave,’ she said, ‘when my poor George married her. She had been, as an infant ; but her parents were set free in San Domingo. They were more than half Spaniards ; *Mustees*, I think they were called in our islands. Three parts white or more. They were free, and living on a plantation of their own, with this their only daughter, when your father saw her.

“‘Poor George ! I cannot blame him much though I did blame him bitterly, more than I

ould, perhaps. I am a hot-tempered old woman, now at all events. She could not help her beauty, and no woman he loved could help loving him. Poor fellow ! I wrote to him again before she died, and sent some jewels for her ; and she sent me a pretty message, poor thing. And then she died, and he died, and there were none left but you and me. And you have been not so bad a child, or would not have been, but for those hypocrites. So let us forget and forgive.'

"It was much harder, Bride, to oppose her gentle, and pleading tenderly, like that.

"I ventured to take her hand. It was rigid, but she let me keep it in both of mine.

"'Dea: Granny, I *can* never forget, I *must* never forget. I will be your own child, if you will let me, as long as you live. But now, and always, *next to you*, I will, I must, I ought to care for *my mother's people* and my father's servants, his slaves, and my kindred. My mother's people must be mine.'

"The little gleam of rare softness and tenderness vanished.

She snatched her hand from me and went up stairs. I took her candle as usual and followed her up to her bedroom. At the door she turned and said, with a concentration of suppressed passion, 'You may sit at my table still, if you like, being your father's child ; *as long as I live*, as you say. And then, if you please, you may go to your mother's relations, to the King of Dahomey, to

the Pope of Rome, or the Methodist madmen, or wherever you please. I daresay you will not have long to wait.'

"And so," Amice concluded, "I do sit at her table; and neither of us speaks a word. Her heart—poor dear Granny—burning with wounded love and pride, and a sense of bitter ingratitude and wrong; and mine overflowing with pity which I cannot utter or look; with reverence for all the long reticence which my many provocations never made her break through during all these years; and with sympathy for what she must feel about my 'wilful folly and heartless ingratitude.' Never once to have suffered me to see a glimpse of a fact which she believed must have at any moment brought me down on my knees in abject humiliation and subjection! And when she brought out this terrible, irresistible weapon, faithfully concealed so long, to find it indeed terrible and irresistible, but altogether turned, as she must feel, against herself. The thing I am most sorry for as regards myself and you, Bride!" she resumed, "is this appearance of concealment about the meeting. I don't think we could have done otherwise. But this made me more resolved to throw off all disguise, and come to the meeting myself. I thought over it all Sunday night, Bride. I hope it did not look like bravado, or any reflection on my father. You think I did right?"

"I am sure," I said, "it was not bravado; it was *confession*; and how are we to help confession

looking like bravado sometimes to those who hate what we confess we believe?"

"Yes," she said. "And for those who are gone, whom we cannot see or consult any more, I always feel we must try to do, not what they would perhaps have wished when they saw in part, but what they would wish now that they see 'face to face;' that is, as far as we can find it out. And I think there is no doubt what would be wished in heaven as to not driving black men like brutes, or as to teaching slaves of Him who makes us all free."

"No doubt at all, I should think," I replied, "as to what is thought in heaven about the slave-trade."

"No," she said; "so I came."

"And now, Bride," she said, "good-bye. You may kiss me if you like, now you know I am the daughter of a slave."

"But why good-bye, Amice?" I said. "You told Madam Glanvil;—and now you are fairly in opposition!"

"For shame, Bride!" she said. "I shall begin to think 'Methodism,' as Granny calls it, does lead to insurrection, as she says. I belong to the Church of England, and believe in the Catechism; and if I have any leaning to any other form of Christianity it is to the Moravians, who are the most conservative and submissive people upon earth. In my great aunt Prothesea's hymn-book, there are whole sections of hymns on the stillness and resignation of the heart, on patience in inward

and outward tribulation, on poverty and lowliness of spirit. Do you know, Bride," she said, with one of her brightest sudden smiles, "I really feel in some way nearer Granny now, and love her better than before. I am not sure sometimes that I do not really love her more than I love you or any one, as I ought perhaps always to have done, and never could do. I am so sorry for her. In every possible thing, Bride, I will submit to Granny, as far as possible; and in this thing, which costs me more than anything, most of all. I have told Granny that you and Mr. Danescombe, and Piers, are noble as Norman conquerors and crusaders, and saints and angels, of better blood than the Glanvils, and ten times better Christians than any of us. And I have also told her that until she sanctions it, I will not see one of you again."

There was no moving her. She had "begun" indeed, as Loveday had said. We neither of us said "good-bye."

We just gave each other one long kiss, and turned and went home our different ways.

So, as it seemed to me, the sun was blotted out of my life, and Amice's warfare began.





CHAPTER XXVIII.

COUSIN CRICHTON went away in a state of radiant satisfaction.

“Who said the tone of Christianity in these days was lowered? Who said people were not ready to cut off the right hand, to go to the rack, the block, the stake, if duty demanded?” His sense of “*solidarité*” in such matters was keen, although the word was yet unborn. He felt, I am sure, as if he had cut off his own right hand, metaphorically. That is, he felt the virtuous satisfaction, and rejoiced in us who had to bear the pain. For Court was closed to us, as absolutely as any Bastille.

Of all our circle only Cousin Dick Fyford and the vicar continued to enter those dear old gates between the savage heraldic griffins.

And Dick's reports were anything but cheerful or cheering. I began almost to believe he had really fallen in love as I had “fallen in friendship” so long ago, deeply, hopelessly, and forever.

“The gates of Court were like the gates of

Dante's hell," he said. (He had been cultivating poetry of the severest and gloomiest kind. Byron was not yet available—had not yet written his satire on "English Bards and Scotch Reviewers." Despairing young persons had therefore to draw from deeper sources, and Dick had found a translation of Dante in Uncle Fyford's library congenial.)

"Abandon all hope, ye who enter here,"

"Lasciate ogni speranza voi ch'entrate,"

was, he considered, breathing out of the savage mouth of those heraldic griffins, written like ancient Hebrew words on the posts of the doors, furrowed on the faces, black and white, of domestic and host. Only to find a similitude for Amice had he to rise to another book of the Divine Comedy.

She was radiant, angelic—more than angelic—tender and good as a dear child, beneficent, gracious, imperial, and, alas! far off as the Madonna Beatrice.

Madam Glanvil never spoke to her. Nor could it be said Madam Glanvil spoke graciously to any one. She seemed, he said, in a kind of way, defying the world to come nearer to her than the child she was thus rigidly keeping from her.

"Very strange," said Dick; "it seems as if those two really loved each other better than before."

I remembered Amice's words.

I thought it was very probably true. Madam Glanvil's speech was at no time exactly conciliatory, or calculated to promote tender feeling.

Perhaps the two were going through a "discipline of silence," as Claire suggested, and it was doing them both good.

But then, for a moment, came a little foolish pang, whether it could be possible that Amice was really not only outwardly but inwardly submitting to her grandmother's will, and making a sacrifice of me in her heart. She was not a woman to do things by halves. And if her conscience did get the upper hand of her good sense, it might possess her like a demon, and lead her to do anything, everything that was hard and dreadful and agonizing to herself. It is just of such strong, true, passionate, steadfast natures martyrs are made; of such natures, a little twisted, anchorets, faqueers, Simon Stylites.

And I, feebler, smaller, with less range, less tone, like a harpsichord to an organ, like my step-mother's spinet to the organ in Westminster Abbey, as I was beside Amice; yet she had always called me her "good-in-everything," her "good genius of common sense." And I was not near to plead for myself or for her. And Dick said she never mentioned me, never asked for any of us never alluded to us.

Did it mean that she was really giving me up; or did it only mean she trusted without the shadow

of a fear that I would always trust her without the shadow of a doubt ?

Yes, it meant that. In all my sane moments I was sure it meant that.

Loveday never had the least doubt it meant that.

Nor had she the least shadow of a doubt who would conquer in that contest between Amice and her grandmother. "Love is stronger than Death," she said, "and than all the shadows of death. After all, death, that is, hatred, pride, selfishness has only shadows for its weapons, and can only conquer shadows. And Amice's love and truth and faith are no shadows. She will overcome sooner or later : she will conquer evil by good. And I think it will be soon."

It did not seem soon to me. And the evil thing which severed Amice and me seemed to me at all events a very substantial negation, as substantial as the negation of a rock to a ship breaking to pieces on it.

It was a time of negations and partings.

At last, Piers, was able to fulfil his desire of paying a visit to France.

He had no need to gather fresh details as to the situation of the chateau where Claire had passed her childhood. That I knew, was what the journey to France chiefly signified to him : but even I never said so, even to him. And to any one else it seemed the most natural thing in the world that any young Englishman, who was able, should take

advantage of the closing of the war gates, to enter the land those open gates had closed to us so long, and might close again so soon.

Madam Glanvil was the only person who looked censoriously on the expedition. And that she did so, was only implied in an observation Dick heard her make to Uncle Fyford.

"The First Consul is doing one good work, at all events," she said. "He is converting the Whigs. I understand, he says he could buy all the French Republicans with a little money and gold-lace. He seems to buy ours without any such expenditure. Charles Fox was hand and glove with him, I understand, in Paris. No wonder if the small fry follow."

"You will pay homage, my friend," said Madame des Ormes, when Piers came to her room to take leave, "to Madame, or *Son Altesse* the First Consules, or whatever they call her, the Creole wife of the Corsican. They say she has a fine Court at the Tuileries, and dresses well. They have set up the opera again. Scarcely necessary, I should have thought. That new theatre at the Tuileries must be more attractive. And Italians and Creoles have talents for the drama, frequently. Of the older noblesse you will find more in England—I had almost said at Abbot's Weir—than at Paris. The *corps dramatique* is complete now, I hear. They have a Church as well as a Court; priests who take the oath to violate the confessional if the government demands information about

what it is pleased to call a *Plot*; bishops appointed by the Corsican, and all paid by him. It is quite complete, and all absolutely in the Manager's hands."

"Mamma," said Claire coloring, "he said he would inquire about our dear old curé at Les Ormes. At all events *he* has not taken that oath."

"No, indeed; many of the old priests are in prison. God bless them," replied Madame. "See, my children," she added, "I grow bitter! Do not the books of piety tell us that all earthly glory is tinsel, all courts but a stage? Only some tinsel is in better taste. There is gilt paper and *ormolu*. And to us, children of time that we are, a thousand years will seem longer than yesterday."

"Mamma," said Claire in a whisper, "It has done one good work, that new government. It has abolished the festival for the guillotining of our king."

"That is always something," Madame conceded. "And the Fast for the Day of his Martyrdom, the prayers, and the weeping, no power in France or out of it can abolish."

"And," suggested sanguine Claire, "they have abolished the Decade, and restored the Week, and the Sunday, and opened the churches."

"Condescending certainly to old-fashioned people, to let them say September and Sunday, once more," Madame admitted.

"There is nothing you can give me to do, Madame?" said Piers.

"My friend," she replied, "my living are here. My dead only are there. Would you have me send you on a pilgrimage to the tombs and ruins? I can not even guide you to those! Our people are industrious. They will not let even the stones of our ruined chateaux be wasted. They will have built useful little *bourgeois* houses with them. But the King, the Queen, Madame Elizabeth—who will tell you even where they sleep, that you might weep for them? My dead in France have no tombs. It is not until the third or fourth generation that men build the sepulchres of the prophets."

"Mamma," pleaded Claire, "there is M. le Curé who instructed me for my first communion. He was so good, and all the people loved him. And there were many who would like to hear of us, of you, if Mr. Piers were near Les Ormes, any day."

"*Ma chérie*, Les Ormes is near nothing except Port Royal des Champs. *There* are tombs at all events, although trampled on and in ruins."

"Madame," said Piers, glancing at Claire, "I will certainly make a pilgrimage to Port Royal des Champs."

"Strange that I have not an introduction to offer you," she said. "It was not so ten years ago. Stay, I will write a little letter for our poor curé."

"Mamma," murmured Claire. "My uncle, the l'Abbé, says the First Consul has a strong secret police, and at the head of it a terrible M. Fouché,

who was a Jacobin. If compromising letters were found—”

“True,” replied Madame. “Take this,” she said; and opening a little cachette, she took out a signet ring and placed it on his finger.

“This is our family *devise*,” she said. “M. le Curé will recognize its bearer as a friend, and will tell you anything he can. Or any of our old servants. But what dreams am I indulging? Who knows where the curé is, or the church? And our old servants may have been made conscripts and killed long ago; or republicans, and may denounce you; or proprietors, and not too anxious for news to disturb their possessions; or they may have been massacred, or *noyaded* as faithful men and women. Take care, my friend, how you use that token. But keep it always, if you will, as a memorial of the old days of our race, and of all the chivalrous kindness of you and yours to an old French citizen. It is not a bad motto,” she concluded—“*Foi, roi, loi*,” in a circle—so no one can say which comes first. Make it Divine, my friend, and then certainly it matters little where the circle begins.”

He kissed her hand, as we had been used to do from childhood, grasped Claire’s for an instant, and went away.

He was to start the next evening.

It was his birthday, in January, the month which had once given and taken away so much, in our home.

I went up to his room to help him pack, or

rather to talk while he was packing. He was always independent of feminine aid in that matter. But carefully as I had looked over everything, there might yet be some stray button or string to sew on.

We talked very fast. He was in high spirits. Once more it was a beginning for him, and felt like an ending for me.

"It is very unreasonable," he said, as he gave a last impressive stamp to his carpet-bag, "to feel as if I were going to do something important. It is scarcely farther to the French coast in time, than to Clapham, scarcely as far, if the wind is fair."

"No," I said. "We have heard enough of that lately from Dick. He says the French say they could be in London in a few hours, from Boulogne. And he would greatly like to be under Neeson's command and to see them try."

"I hope they will wait till I come back, and have accomplished my mission, whatever it is," he said.

"Do you remember years and years and years ago," I said, "when you were a little boy, and when first we met Claire, and when Claire kissed me with the fool's cap on, and you said '*it would be worth while to do something like that for her*;' and I said, 'there was nothing to be done;' and you said something always came to be done when it was the right time."

"Bride," he said, stooping over the portmanteau and energetically snapping the lock, "Your gram

mar is getting very confused. Unhappily you never went to Mr. Rabbidge's and learnt about aorists and imperfects, and narrative tenses. Something has never come, you see. And to go to France to look for it does seem what Uncle Fyford would call Utopian and Mr. Rabbidge chimerical."

"Yet you are going," I said.

"It would be something to find there was nothing to be done," he answered. "To find, that is to say, that France can do nothing for her; and, so, that there may indeed be something for us to do for her."

And so the next morning, to Madam Glanvil's indignation, to Madame des Ormes's perplexity, and a little to Claire's, but full of purpose and hope, which, as usual with him, came out but little in words, in the crisp January frost, he went off across the moors to the sea.





CHAPTER XXIX.

THUS Piers went out, it seemed to me, into the bracing air, and the morning sunshine, and I turned back to the dusk and the chill.

Such a dimness and chill fell on everything when he was gone! Such fears came for him, for England, for the slaves, for Amice, for our little Sunday-school, for everything! And indeed those winter days early in 1803 were dark months for England; and for Abbot's Weir; chill and chaotic—full of uncertainties and indecisions for us all.

In February England was thrilled to her remotest bounds by one of those great common impulses which now and then prove the living unity of national existence, and in proving quicken and raise the national life.

The trial of Peltier was going on in the Court of Queen's Bench. The prosecutor, our Attorney-general, on behalf of Napoleon Bonaparte; the defendant, an obscure Royalist emigré; the accusation, libel against a friendly government; the advocate, Sir James Mackintosh. In reality England

felt, and millions in silenced Europe felt it was Liberty that was on her trial in her last asylum; the accuser, Despotism embodied in the First Consul; the advocate the last country in the world in which the press remained free.

Mackintosh's eloquent words vibrated throughout the land. England was quite capable of being simultaneously electrified to her remotest towns, and villages, and homesteads, before the electric telegraph came into being; simultaneously for all working purposes.

We make too much, I think, sometimes of these material inventions. Eager groups awaited the little badly-printed reports of the trial, and news from the passengers, at every inn-door, as the lumbering coaches passed through. Slow communications, clumsy reports; yet the heart of the old country beat warm and fast enough.

"Mackintosh called on his countrymen to pause before the earthquake swallowed up the last refuge of liberty. Switzerland and Holland once had a free press. Switzerland and Holland (two of Bonaparte's *miserable bagatelles*) existed no more. Since the prosecutions had begun, fifty old imperial free German cities had vanished. When vast projects of aggrandizement are manifested," he said, "when schemes of criminal ambition are carried into effect, the day of battle is fast approaching for England. Her free press can only fall under the ruins of the British Empire. Her free government cannot engage in dangerous wars

without the free and hearty support of her people. A king of England who, in such circumstances, should conspire against the free press of the country would silence the trumpet which is to call his people around his standard."

The verdict was given by the reluctant jury as a matter of law, against Peltier. But the defence was translated into every European language (into French by Madame de Staël); and the challenge of England was virtually thrown down to Napoleon.

For in those months England was "drifting" into war, alone, without one nation in the world to stand by her, and without a hand she trusted at the helm.

Rumors reached us of insults offered to our Ambassador, Lord Whitworth, at the Court—they began to call it a Court—of the First Consul; insults borne by England with the kind of easy patience of large creatures, which so often misleads other creatures to provoke that large and careless tolerance beyond its limits. Remonstrance against Bonaparte's aggressions, met with a contemptuous sarcasm, in reference to our refusal to yield Malta, by angry taunts of "perfidious breach of treaties" and threats of the consequences, launched in full saloon at Lord Whitworth; until, at length, the "nation of shopkeepers," as the First Consul called it, was roused to that total disregard of profit and loss, that fearless daring of all consequences which however frequently repeated in "our island-story,"

seems always to take the rest of the European world by surprise.

War was declared, or rather accepted. Two French privateers were captured. And in one of the dramatic rages with which he cowed the rest of the world, the First Consul, in revenge, seized ten thousand British subjects, who happened to be peacefully travelling in France; the ten thousand "*détenus*," who throughout the campaigns of Nelson and Wellington had to linger out the weary years in French prisons, or at least, in a society which to them was all one prison.

And among them was our own Piers.

We refused to believe it for a long time. Piers, we said to each other, could speak French so well, he was sure to escape when others would be detected. But then, acting, or any kind of stratagem or disguise were so foreign to his nature; and his whole bearing was "so English," Claire said despondingly, though far from disparagingly. But then, she added, there were sure to be kind souls ready to help a stranger in France; had not they found it so in England? and would her compatriots be outdone? She was sure there must be fathers and mothers and sisters in France who would feel how Piers would be missed, and would help him to return to us.

In March I had received a letter from Piers, quite long for him. He had made his way to two of the Marquise's former estates. He had looked for the curé, but in vain. One hundred and fifty

priests were in prison in the diocese of Paris, for refusing to take the oaths required by the government. "And yet," wrote Piers, "his Highness has placed the bust of Brutus in the Tuileries, to convince every one that liberty is as dear to him and to France as ever."

He did not find the peasants miserable. Mr. Arthur Young had said before the Revolution that more than half of the land of France already belonged to the peasants, only burdened by compulsory service (in making and repairing roads, for instance,) and by other oppressive burdens. The Revolution abolished the burdens. Piers supposed it was so on this estate of Madame's. Her peasants affectionately remembered the Seigneur's family, spoke most cordially of them, asked for Madame and the little Demoiselle; but did not exactly wish to have the burdens re-imposed. The Department now made the roads and paid for having them made. And they had more to eat and drink, and better clothes to wear; at least they would have, were it not for the war and the conscription. They wished England would be tranquil, and the Emigrés nobles would not excite her to combat, as it was reported they did. Then Madame might come back to live among them,—if not exactly as before—the château had unfortunately been burnt—yet to such wealth as was compatible with a republic.

Another of the Des Ormes estates had been purchased by the former Intendant for a nominal

sum, and he and his aged wife listened with tearful interest to all Piers could relate of Madame and Claire. The old man regarded himself as only manager of the property, as of old, and looked forward to restore it one day to Madame. But he entreated that she would come back without delay. For, he privately told Piers, "he had a great nephew, his heir, brought up in the atmosphere of the new *régime* if *régime* it could be called, and he could not be sure of his loyalty to any one or anything. He was a fine young man, however, and his mother a lady of the fallen noblesse—the petite noblesse certainly, not such a house as the Des Ormes. But he had sometimes thought whether an alliance might be possible?" Piers had seen the great nephew privately, and thought him an intolerable dandy and upstart. He could scarcely bear to write the words of the Intendant, but the old man had insisted, and as an envoy he thought himself bound to yield. In a fortnight, or less now, he hoped himself to be with us again.

He wished to say something cheering to Madame. But it was difficult. I must judge how much to mention to her. Ten years was a long time anywhere. In ten years babies grew into youths, children into men, young men into thrifty fathers of families. It was a very long period in a country which could not count ten years from its new era, in which an institution which had lasted a twelvemonth seemed almost antique. To come back to old England he felt would be

like stepping from a raft, just lashed together out of broken pieces of the ship, to *terra firma*. He only trusted Madame might feel the same. England was perhaps a rocky, chill, cheerless region compared with her sunny France. But it *was* a rock. And just now the seas seemed very stormy. He felt he should have a little storm to weather in getting home. People's minds seemed excited by the news from across the Channel. Something about the conquest of Malta; and an *emigre* pamphleteer who had been libelling the First Consul. He hoped England would stand firm. George Crichton was returning that very day, and would bring the letter, so that, at least, was all safe. He had one more journey to make to find the curé Madame had wished him to see: and then, home.

George Crichton was all safe certainly, and returned home; and Clapham seemed to me a little self-satisfied as to its usual prudence and sagacity in keeping out of scrapes. George had warned Piers, he wrote to us, of the danger of thus lingering. But that one commission Piers had said he must execute. And so the fatal day overtook him. And he was detained, it seemed probable, near Madame's former home, not far from Port Royal des Champs, whither he had gone to make one more search for the curé, who might, it was thought, be in hiding with some of the faithful among the peasantry.

Madame was, at first, much incensed at the proposition of her intendant with regard to Clair.

"Poor man!" she said, "to such a degree have these whirlwinds turned the best brains and bewildered the most loyal hearts. But the great-nephew, insufferable young man! I suppose he would think it a condescension to endow my daughter with the remnant of the property of which they have despoiled our house."

"But, Maman," said Claire, "it is not said that the young man entertains the thought: at least let us exonerate him!"

"What can you know, my innocent child? Of course I do not suspect any young persons of taking such an affair into their own hands. This at least, the duty of parents to provide marriages for their children, the Revolution has not changed. From such disorganization France is yet preserved."

Yet, now and then she returned to the intend-ant's scheme.

"Perhaps pride is after all the sin which has brought down our order," she said one day to Claire. M. l'Intendant seems to have spoken deferentially and loyally; and, as you say, the young man is not to be blamed. And if his mother were, indeed, of good blood! The poor great-uncle is fond, no doubt; but he says the young man is beautiful, let us hope also good. The family were always devout."

But at this point, Claire, regardless of consistency, entirely abandoned the defence of the young man.

"M. Piers writes that he is an upstart, a 'dandy,'" said she.

"Ah, my child! the English have ideas a little different from ours. Those fine manners which we used to cultivate are not to their taste. And now, they say, they are not cultivated even in France. How could they, the root being cut away? On the whole, perhaps, it does not speak badly for a young man that he should in these republican days have manners an Englishman might think too elaborate."

"My mother!" Claire replied, "I think M. Piers would judge well of manners."

"No doubt, my child. For England, the Danescobes have excellent manners. And what has my poor child known better? I have been unjust to thee, my Claire. I should have accepted the Countess of Abbot's Weir's invitation for thee; then thou wouldst have seen the world. What should have been *thy* world; as far indeed as that can exist anywhere out of France; anywhere in the world, now."

"Unjust to me!" said Claire, "my mother! Never. Would I have left thee? But let us not be unjust to any who have been good to us. M. Piers went—is detained—for us, mother."

"It is true, my child; I weep for him, I pray for him, night and day. The most generous heart! But, for thee? I cannot always be with thee. Sometimes I feel as if every day were breaking some of the few threads that keep my body here.

And before I go, I would fain do my duty for thee, if I knew it. M. l'Intendant was a brave and loyal servant always. I spoke hastily of him. God forgive me. I have failed in so much ! ”

And then the little tender veil of concealment for a moment was laid aside, and the two wept in one another's arms.

For a little shadow was falling on Claire—a little shadow from one human form ; yet, within that shadow, an eclipse of the sun would, to her, have added little darkness. Slowly, imperceptibly decay and ruin were creeping on all that made her home, on all that made the world home to her ; ruin beside which, when it came, the crush of falling nations, or of falling worlds, would for her have added little tumult.

No longer now so very slowly, or imperceptibly, the stages of declining strength were measured.

From the chair to the couch, from the couch to the bed, from helplessness to helplessness. The steps we all have to tread, unless for us the last descent which leads to the shining upward way, is a precipice.

And then came the keen March winds, penetrating irresistibly through the carefully guarded windows. And then a few days of bewilderment and anguish. And then the difficult way was over ; and the mother was perplexed about her duties no more, or the duties of others.

She had been led at last “ by the right way to the city of habitation.”

She received the last sacraments of the Church. There was no time for words or last directions. Bequests there were none to make. Madam had nothing to leave to the world but her Claire, and scarcely anything to leave to Claire but her blessing.

She left her child to God.

And as she breathed out this her last blessing and bequest in one, she smiled at Léontine, and then she looked with a very wistful gaze at Love-day and me.

Then Claire pressed the crucifix to her lips, and breathing the one Name, which is above every name, the only Name for dying lips, the patient chastened spirit passed away.

We thought there was a light on her countenance, as of eyes that had met other eyes, long sought, and in one glance understood all that had perplexed.

We knew that the patient, mourning, lowly, purified spirit was blessed at last with all the beatitudes, comforted, satisfied, seeing God.

Satisfied also for us, even for her child. And now, Claire also had to learn the old lesson of my childhood, to follow the motherly eyes "up to His face."

And being sweeter and more trustful than I, she learned her lesson sooner and better.

She was different from me; more reasonable, more disciplined, and also more able to take com-

fort in little things, refusing no crumb of comfort, no ray of light, from any side.

Sometimes I wondered.

To me the feeling in sorrow was,—

“My feast of joy has been swept away. I will not refuse the crumbs under the table as sustenance. That would be suicide. But to give thanks at the empty table for the crumbs, and pretend to say grace as for the feast, that would be servile, false. And I will not try. I will mingle ashes with my bread, and my drink with weeping. God is a Father, my Father, the Father. He will understand.”

But Claire, even in this sorrow which cleft her tender heart, as well I knew, was still like a guest at a king's table. It seemed to me as if the old habits of her high-breeding went through her soul, and pervaded her religion.

She would not fail in any gracious form of courtesy because her heart was breaking, any more than her mother when her life was ebbing; not even, if I may say so, with God.

She opened her windows literally and symbolically to the sunshine. She spread the little white tables with the primroses her mother had delighted in. She kept the room clear and pleasant, as if her mother were on a journey, and she had expected her home. And yet her dear brown eyes were often dim and red with weeping.

“The good God thought it worth while to make the primroses this spring,” said she, “and should I fail to show Him I see, and care and am grateful?”

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And then *she* cared, Bride. She cared so much! although she has so much that is fairer and better to care for now."

"When I can give thank Bride, and be a little glad, I know I am feeling as little as she is feeling now. But," she added, with a sudden burst of weeping, "I cannot; I cannot always! Only then I hope God is making something deeper in my heart, that by-and-by there may be more room, and I may feel even more as she is feeling, yes, always more and more."





CHAPTER XXX.

THE seizure of the ten thousand English in France roused the nation from John o' Groat's House to the Land's End. At last England set herself resolutely against the stream, regardless who pulled with her.

From that time till the end of the war twelve years afterwards, whatever some factious men might write about the futility of opposing Bonaparte and his "invincibles," and however a feeble policy might reduce the war to "neat and ineffective expeditions," the nation went heart and soul into the conflict, her spirit keeping firm in victory, and rising with defeat.

For twelve years we felt ourselves, every inch of us, one Nation, and a nation standing alone, for all nations, for all the kingdoms of the world against one devouring Universal Empire. As long as England stood, Napoleon could not assume the coveted title of "Emperor of the West."

The symbols of the Hebrew prophets and of the Apocalypse came into men's minds in those days as no oriental hyperbole, but the natural and

only adequate description of what was happening through Europe during those terrible years.

Poor young Emmett, the Irish rebel, requested a reprieve of a few days to finish his pamphlet "on the near approach of the Millennium."

"*Wild beasts which devoured and broke in pieces, and stamped the residue with their feet,*" seemed the most obvious representation of all the nations, at least of that one nation, which having cast off homage to her king and faith in her God, now crouched under the power "dreadful and terrible, and strong exceedingly," which springing "from the sand of the sea," from the dust of the earth, from nothing, made war with kings and subdued them, made war against "the host of heaven" and "cast the stars down from their places."

It is difficult even at this distance, even for us who remember, to revive in our minds the preternatural terror that surrounded the name of Bonaparte. Why should it be deemed incredible that he should attain any height of power, the Corsican lawyer's son, the young artillery officer, whom emperors had become proud to call brother, who disposed of thrones to his kindred or his generals? How could it be deemed incredible that he should commit any crime, who, as we all believed, had murdered the young Duc d'Enghien at midnight; who had caused Pichegru to be strangled in one prison, and Toussaint L'Ouverture to be starved with cold and hunger in another; who



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massacred his prisoners in Syria, and shot six thousand Russians kneeling helpless on the ice; who, when thousands of his own men fell, shuddered a little at the blood-stains on the white uniform they happened to be wearing, and as a remedy commanded "only blue uniforms" in future; who never hesitated at a falsehood or a slaughter; and for what object? The glory of France? He was not even a Frenchman. His own supremacy? No man disputed it. It was little wonder if to some he seemed an incarnation of some preternatural power without human heart or conscience, and without human limitations, so swift, so unable to rest, so invincible in destruction, so unable, it seemed, to do anything but destroy.

Three successive Augusts he fixed his camp at Boulogne, gazing menacingly across at our white cliffs—and gathering his hundred thousand around him to cross the sea and assail us.

In the first August, 1803, England answered him by enrolling her three hundred thousand volunteers, to avenge her ten thousand *détenus*, and to meet the hundred and twenty thousand veterans at Boulogne.

We laughed at ourselves and our voluntary defenders, freely, as the custom of our country is. Every town had its jokes against itself and its citizen soldiers (the old butt of wits from time immemorial), the cut of their uniforms, or the handling of their arms; and Abbot's Weir was not behind the rest. I remember well old stories of the

heroic valor with which our gallant volunteers went forth with fife and drum to encounter a reported outbreak of prisoners of war, and finding the enemy to be nothing but certain white stones set to mark the road across the moors, returned safe but inglorious. And again, how on occasion of some review by some distinguished officer of the time, the manœuvres signally failed in consequence of the bugleman having blown a quid of tobacco into his bugle.

We laughed at each other, and grumbled at the powers that be, as our wont is; believing in each other and obeying the powers that be all the time, in that inconsistent manner which amuses us, and perplexes and sometimes misleads our neighbors not a little.

Not a groat did the government pay, or would any Englishman accept for uniforms, arms, or time.

Meantime Mr. Pitt still kept out of what most of us felt was his place at the head of the nation, was living at Walmer, commanding volunteers. Great drillings were going on throughout the land, in town market-houses, on village greens. Dibdin's songs were sung everywhere, and old Scotch ballads were revived. "Scots wha hae wi' Wallace bled, Scots wha Bruce has often led," fraternizing with "Britons who never would be slaves."

It was an uneasy time for Quakers. To be a man of peace meant to most of us little less than to be a traitor.

How much did it all mean?

Disciplined, and under able leadership, it meant something at Trafalgar, in the Peninsular War, and at Waterloo.

Bonaparte never obtained a chance to prove what it would have meant on our own shores. It meant, at least, that the nation felt herself a nation; and that every atom of the body politic had become for the time, an atom multiplied by the sum of the whole. It meant that we all knew there was something worth infinitely more than money; and, many of us, that there is something worth more than life.

Once more the eloquent words of Sir James Mackintosh, the Advocate of Peltier, in the "declaration of the merchants, bankers, traders, of London" rang through the land. "We deem it our duty solemnly to bind ourselves to each other and to our countrymen, that we will employ all our exertions to rouse the spirit, and to assist the resources of the kingdom; that we will be ready with our services of every sort in its defence; and that we will rather perish together than live to see the honor of the British name tarnished, or that noble inheritance of greatness, glory, and liberty destroyed, which has descended to us from our forefathers, and which we are determined to transmit to our posterity."

On the 2d of August, 1804, when Bonaparte came to threaten us the second time from Boulogne with his myriads, and his flat-bottomed

boats, the pomp of his ceremonial was more splendid than at first. He had been decreed to be Emperor by the Senate on the 18th of May, and his Josephine was Empress. In form, nothing was wanting to the dramatic representation of the Roman invasion. The imperial throne was set up on the coast, the legions paid homage around.

But on that same 18th of May, the Englishman we acknowledged as our chief had his hand once more on the helm.

William Pitt was Prime Minister of England once more.

Our little world at Abbot's Weir, indeed, had its separate shadows and eclipses. But hope was strong in us. We had a conviction, Claire and I, that the world must brighten again, simply because we were young. And I always thought Pitt and Nelson were about to finish the war, and set Piers free.

In one respect Claire and I had drawn nearer to each other.

After much thought Claire had decided to attend our church. She thought the religion which made England what it was, must be stronger and truer than that which had either made or left France what it was; that the church which fearlessly gave the Bible to the people, and the faith which laid hold throughout the land, not only on the hearts of gentle women to sweeten them but of

rough men to change and save them, which made freedom and loyalty possible together, could not have wandered far from their divine source. Perhaps, also, Léontine and her Huguenot faith had unconsciously influenced her, and that century of persecution which had robbed France of her noblest; certainly Loveday and all she had seen in her. However it came about, so it was, that one Sunday morning she walked quietly across the market-place with Léontine, and asked if she might sit in our pew. And that Easter she received the Sacrament, kneeling between my father and me under the old altar window.

"If this is indeed the best I could do," she said to me afterwards, as we walked across the pleasant Leas where Piers and I used to stroll on Sunday afternoons, "my mother and yours would be glad, Bride. And I think it is. And I think they are."

She had always a strange sense, for one so buoyant, of the transitoriness of this life, and its continuity with the next. Perhaps her old Catholic training had helped her to it, linking the living and the dead, by more unbroken ties, than some forms of Protestantism. Perhaps, also, the convulsions which had desolated her country and her home. I always felt that to me life was in some sense more solid, to her more liquid; to me as the firm land which could only be parted by earthquakes, to her as the waves of a changing sea forever heaving and parting, while bearing us on to the invisible shore.

She spoke of death more easily than I could; more as one of "the incidents of life," as one of its separations, and not always the worst.

Now and then little letters came to us from Piers, quite cheerful, insisting that he was not wasting his time, that he was quite well treated, was earning his living, and gaining valuable experience.

In the first he sent a message to Madame, very reticent and deferential, but not very bright as to the state of her property, although the *ci-divant* intendant was preparing, he hoped, to send her some remittances.

In the second, having heard of Madame's death, all his reticence was gone. He poured out all his heart to me about Claire. If I thought there was any chance of her caring for him, I was to tell her now; inferior in rank and position, in everything, as he was, he loved her. He was sure I must know; he almost thought she must know. He almost feared she must know so well that she could not care for him, or he should have known that she did. And if she did not, could not ever care, I was not to breathe a word, but to be as a sister to her always. He was sure our father would care for her as a child. But if only there *could* be the *right* to do it, etc., etc.

And I told our father; and quite simply he went to Claire. And so the perplexities and uncertainties were over. And Claire became our own, and wrote, herself, a few words to Piers, only

a few, because it was so doubtful if they would reach him. She said it was for her he had become a prisoner, and it was but his due. But the little letter did reach him, and seemed to be as satisfactory to him as a volume.

Thenceforth they corresponded, and those letters which I never saw wonderfully lightened the separation, even to me; they made Claire so happy, that the reflected light gave me faith in its source, through all the darkness of absence. Probably, moreover, the separation by seas and continents lightened the other separation between the brother and sister, which must have come for me, when, however the love might continue, the whole weight of his heart's confidence and care came to rest on another.

I seemed to gain a sister in Claire before I parted with anything of a brother to Piers's bride.

Moreover, this betrothal, which my father wished to be known at once, had an unforeseen effect on the relations between Amice and her grandmother.

One morning when I was tying sweet-peas in the upper terrace of our garden, to my wonder and joy, Amice herself came out from the Aladdin's-lamp-like-door of the little subterranean passage, and walked up the steep slope. I was too surprised even to run and meet her. The "honor due," as I knew Amice felt, to Madam Glanvil, had so

sealed my lips, and made me shrink from anything like a clandestine interview.

We shook hands and kissed, without any extra demonstrations, as if we had only parted yesterday. Indeed we had lived together all the time, although it was a year since we had met; because, whatever happened, I knew always what Amice was thinking and feeling about it. And Amice was at all times rather like a boy, as Piers used to say, or rather like her grandmother, as to demonstration of feeling.

"*Granny sent me!*" said she with a dry little smile. "She said to me this morning at breakfast, when Cato and Cæsar had left us,—

"'Child! with all your patience and submission, you are as proud as any Glanvil of them all; and that is the only excuse for you. If you had been humble enough to fret, and cry, and rage a little like other girls, it would all have been over months ago. I feel for Bride Danescombe. Why have you shut her out from Court all this time? Of course you might have known I did not mean it.'

"Of course I made no apology or self-defence. And she continued,—

"'I hope you are the better for the silence. I believe I am. But some one must begin to speak. And as I am deaf, and most used to speaking, I suppose it must be me. What is this about Piers Danescombe?'

"I told her of the engagement with Claire.

“‘Very ridiculous,’ she said, but she looked pleased. ‘The boy a prisoner, and the girl a beggar. However it is better than your poor great-aunt Prothesea and her Elder. If one is to fight any one, or love any one, but an Englishman, it had better be a Frenchman. It seems more natural. One’s ancestors hundreds of years ago might have done the same. Besides it is rather a chance we Glanvils did not stay in Normandy, and then we might all unfortunately have been French. There are only two nations, after all, of really old family, the French and ourselves. The rest of them are children, parvenus, savages just civilized. Who had ever heard of Russia when the Glanvils came with the Conqueror, or of Prussia, or even of Austria? Then, besides, I don’t like this partition of Poland. Not that I think much of the Poles. But we got over our little pilferings in the dusk, before history began, we old nations and old families. It is discreditably to be caught doing these things in the daylight.’

“I suggested that the Hohenstaufen and the Hohenzollern were not altogether of new blood, and that the Holy Roman Empire was rather ancient.

“‘Hohenstuff and Holy Roman nonsense,’ said Granny irreverently, not believing in history or in foreign languages, ‘that little French thing is not a Roman, at all events, I am glad to see by her coming every Sunday to church. You may have her here with Bride Danescombe.’

“But Granny,’ I said, ‘do not talk to her about things Roman, or English and French.’

“Do you think that I do not know how to talk to young women in love? I was in love myself once, and am not such a monster after all,’ said Granny; ‘and,’ she added parenthetically, as she rose from table, ‘by the way, I have been thinking a good deal. And as to packing the negroes in ships, perhaps John Wesley was right. Not that I think any better of the blacks,’ she continued, ‘not a bit of it; nor of the Methodists. An idle, incorrigible, chattering set, all of them. They may do each other what good or harm they can for me.’

“Which was Granny’s form of adhesion to the abolition of the slave-trade, and the toleration of missionaries in the plantations.”

“Claire always said ‘the discipline of silence’ would work well,” I said, “and it certainly has.”

“So,” said Amice, with her little dropping of laughter, “I have lost my only chance of ‘the red rose’ of martyrdom, Bride, and am obliged to be prosperous as your friends at Clapham, and do all my good works to the music of silver trumpets, in the sunshine. At least until I can get to my poor negroes myself. But oh, Bride,” she said, her eyes moistening and her whole dear face radiant, “all this means so much, so much, for Granny! And do you know she told me I might have the servants in for family prayer. ‘And a chapter from the Bible, or a Psalm, if you like,’ she

said. 'Not too long, and take care that it is out of the Lessons. I will not have any separatist rambling about the Bible wherever you choose. And a prayer out of a book. No ranting. One or two of the collects will do.' And she concluded by saying, 'I think we might have the Confession. The Confession is very suitable. I have been saying it over often lately, and I hope it has done me a little good.'"



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CHAPTER XXXI.

FOR two years our island was islanded as it had scarcely been before. The Continent was closed to our travellers. Few foreigners entered England, except reluctantly, as exiles or prisoners of war. Yet it so happened that our little world of Abbot's Weir was widened instead of being narrowed by the exclusion.

One of the prisons of war was placed among the bleak moorlands not far from us, where bogs and wild ranges of lonely hills made approach difficult, and escape, for a foreigner, almost impossible.

Our hearts ached often for the men torn from pleasant France to drone away the prime of life within those cheerless walls.

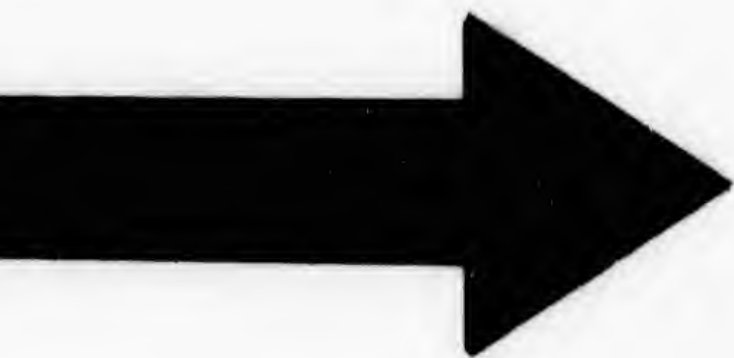
The Latin inscription over the gates,

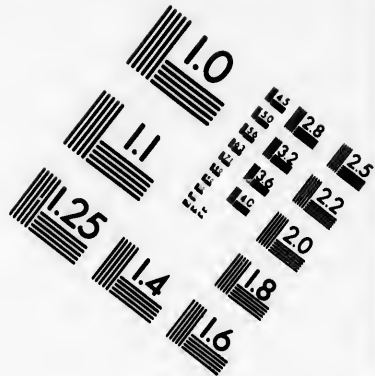
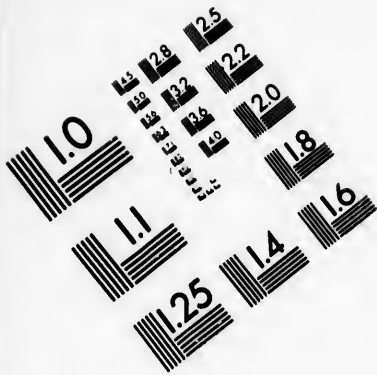
"PARCERE SUBJECTIS,"

must have read like a mockery to many who entered them.

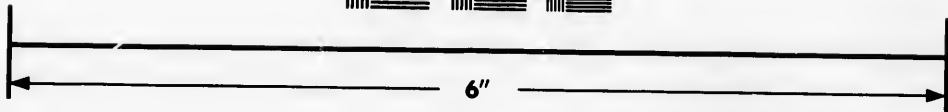
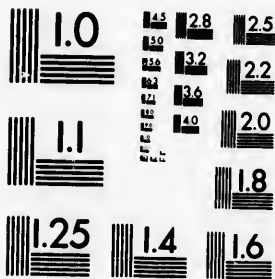
However, with the buoyancy of their race, the French prisoners made the best of their circum-







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stances, kept up each other's spirits by tale and chanson, carved delicate toys out of bones, twisted chains, bracelets, and ornaments out of hair, thought it worth while even in that depth and darkness to make the depth and darkness as light and as tolerable as they could.

With the Americans, men of our own race, who were brought there afterwards, it was different. They drank the cup to the dregs, as those of our race are apt to do, scorning small alleviations, refusing comfort.

Some of us console ourselves by saying that it is the nobler animals, to which freedom is as the breath of life, which beat their wings against the cage and break their hearts against the inevitable; that it is the very energy which makes our race strong against remediable ills, which renders them desperate beneath the irremediable.

Yet the creatures who sing in their cages have surely also their merit and their strength. It takes at least as much courage to sing away despair, as to beat against the prison-bars.

Patience has its manly heroism as well as its feminine beauty, is a "virtue" as well as a grace; and certainly it takes a larger weight of Christianity to make us patient than some of our neighbors.

Claire naturally made the French prison her "parish;" she and Léontine knitting and sewing warm clothes for them, and doing what was more difficult to her, making "quêtes" in all directions

for money to help her compatriots, whether in the form of direct alms, or purchase of their wares.

In this good work she found a fervent supporter in a young French naval officer, Captain Godefroy, who was taken in one of the earliest naval engagements, and sent to Abbot's Weir on parole.

I cannot say the French officers were admitted without precautions into our homes. Military men in general were in matrimonial respects not popular among our sober-minded townsfolk. And French soldiers were certainly not regarded as the least perilous to feminine hearts.

But Captain Godefroy was altogether an exception. In the first place he was not a soldier but a sailor, which in itself was something of a passport to our insular natures; in the second he was not a "Papist" but a Protestant; in the third he was not gay, or debonnaire, or fascinating, or "French," according to any type we recognized. In the last place, (really in the last,) he was a man of some property, and had remittances, and paid his debts most rigidly. And so he became soon quite domiciled among us.

Even Madam Glanvil invited him.

I was at Court when she first mentioned him. She had seen him at Church on Sunday.

"Who is that fine, sad-looking man," said she to Amice, "in a French naval uniform, who sat in the free seats yesterday? He ought not to sit in

the free seats. He is a gentleman. Ask him into ours. Or stay! the vicar might have him. I will speak to the vicar. He was quite an example, so grave and devout, never looked at any one, quite an example, especially as of course he could not understand a word of what was going on."

But Amice said hastily, "He does understand English."

"What is his name?" asked Madam Glanvil.

Amice did not know.

"Very strange you should know he knows English, and yet not know his name," said her grandmother.

"I know he understands English, because he asked me a question at our gate, and understood my answer. But of course I had no necessity or right to ask his name."

"What did he ask?" said Madam Glanvil, "and at which gate?"

"The gate at the end of the wood, Granny," said Amice, "on the road to the moor. You know it is the limit of the parole for the French prisoners."

"I know no such thing. A very accommodating rule for us!" said Madam Glanvil, grimly. "I should recommend the French prisoners, as a rule, to walk the other way. There are three other roads. And I have no desire to have foreigners prowling about our cottages, among the maidens and the hens. Frenchmen eat eggs by

the dozen, and no doubt think all fair in love and war."

Amice laughed, but her color rose a little. She was not given to "flush and blush" as her grandmother accused me of doing.

"If you wish him to sit in our pew, Granny," said she, "you had better clear your mind first as to the eggs, or perhaps you might not enjoy saying the responses to the Commandments together."

"But all this time you have never told me what he asked. Why cannot you tell plainly at once?"

"I can and will," said Amice. "There is hardly anything to tell. It is a very short story. I was coming up out of the wood, and he stood at the gate with one of Honor Rosekelly's grandchildren on his shoulder. He took off his hat, and with a very serious look, begged my pardon for speaking. The little creature looked quite at home with him. And the grave, sad look went out of his face when he spoke to her. He said he had found the little maid crying bitterly in the road for mammy; she seemed to have lost her way, and could only point up the lane beyond the gate, "which," he said, with a slight momentary smile, "involved him in a case of conscience, between charity and truth, the gate being the furthest limit permitted to his parole."

"Well, what did you do?"

"What could I do, Granny, but take the child

from him, and carry it to old Honor's cottage myself?"

"No, poor fellow! You were very clever to understand him," said Madam Glanvil. "No doubt he has a wife and children of his own at home. Those sailors always marry early. I will invite the vicar, and Mr. Danescombe and his wife, and ask him to meet them. You should write at once, if I could only find out the name. And you can ask the little French girl. She will be somebody for him to speak to," concluded Madam Glanvil, unmoved as to her conviction of the impossibility of a foreigner speaking English in any intelligible manner.

"His name is Godefroy," I said, "Captain Hervé Godefroy. His family is from Normandy."

"Normandy!" said Madam Glanvil. "Almost as good as a cousin. I have no doubt his forefathers fought side by side with ours. Poor fellow! pity they did not come over with us. His wife and children must be very sorry now, that they stayed behind."

And so Madam Glanvil, having provided Captain Godefroy with suitable domestic ties, and almost proved to her own satisfaction that he was scarcely a Frenchman at all, broke down her usual rule of exclusion; and the young French officer obtained the *entrée* to Court.

And so, as my selfish heart cried out at first, my Amice was stolen away from me. And so, as love learned in the end, our Amice found the ful-

filment of her life, and gave us Hervé Godefroi, and Hervé Godefroi gave her back to us worth tenfold all she had been before.

Madam Glanvil herself fell straightway into grandmotherly love for the young man.

He had a grave and tender deference for her, which brought out all the high breeding that belonged of right to her gentle blood. With him her manners took a sweet, old-fashioned, stately courtesy which surprised those who did not know that her eccentricities were but a crust underneath which lay, not only a generous heart, but a fine old polish, inwrought, as in her old oaken furniture, from the use of centuries. It was a pleasant sight to see him kiss her hand, the tender gravity with which he paid, and the lofty yet half shy grace with which she received the homage. The first time, I remember a faint blush came on the fine, fair, proud, old face, and gave one a vision of what it must have been before the strong lines of age, and of habitual care and command had stamped it. She said Captain Godefroy had evidently had a gentleman for his father, and a gentlewoman for his mother. Her courtesy entirely checked, as regarded him, the peremptory inquisition to which she subjected most people. She did not even ask him about the wife and little children with whom she had endowed him. She thought it might be too painful for him to speak of them.

Indeed there was a kind of gravity and loftiness about the young French officer which prevented

Abbot's Weir in general from gratifying its curiosity by direct questioning, and therefore left a large margin around him for legends and myths on which any light thrown by casual revelations of his own, was welcomed, and multiplied into a hundred prisms.

Not that he made any mysteries about himself. No man could be more frank and straightforward. Intrusive curiosity he was certainly capable of baffling. But in general he was simply unaware that people cared to know about him. Reticent he naturally was. It had, moreover, not been the habit of the men of the "religion" in France to talk much about themselves.

The Protestants of France had passed through a two hundred years "discipline of silence," living all that time deprived of utterance in public assemblies or in books,—by their very firesides watched by spies and invaded by dragonnades. The discipline had not been without fruit. It had not deprived them of the rapid and acute eloquence which belongs to their nation; but it had pruned from them the habit of boastful and superfluous speech. There had been little temptation to them to speak of what were their true glories, the gibbet, the stake, the wheel, the galleys, the massacred congregations, the violated hearth, encountered for truth and for God.

My father from the first had taken greatly to him. They had had many hopes and many *désillusionnements* in common. And to Madam Glan-

vil he spoke freely. To all aged people his manner had a deference which was much more than manner. He believed in the venerableness of old age.

And there was a clear ring in his rich tenor voice, and a distinctness in his measured and slightly foreign accent which always made his words intelligible to a deafness, as we knew of old, always a little arbitrary and discriminating.

And Amice, during these dialogues, took in a highly feminine way to knitting; now and then interposing with a low word in response to an appeal of his, and always constituting to him the chief part of the audience.

And I sat sometimes, and listened too, and watched my darling—my heroine's heart being won; at first, as it seemed, from me, but afterwards, as I learned, for me and for all.

His father was of an old family of Norman gentlemen. Not sixty years before, in Normandy, six hundred Protestants of the generation of his father and grandfather had escaped from a fresh outburst of the persecution, happily the last on a national scale. Their homes had been broken into at night by officers of the king's archers accompanied by the curés of the parish, and their children, especially their young daughters, seized from them with cruel sabre-cuts and blasphemies, to be thrust into convents, there to be taught the Roman Catholic religion at the expense of their parents. Happily that district was near the sea coast, and the midday of

the eighteenth century was nearly reached ; and so the last large emigration of Protestant refugees escaped better than most of their forefathers.

"Pity," Madam Glanvil said, "your father had not been among those exiles, you would then have been fighting on our side."

Captain Godefroy's mother was a Guiton ;—a descendant of the family of the brave Mayor Guiton, who held starving La Rochelle so long against the king's forces.

"Ah!" Madam Glanvil admitted, "I have always been sorry at my heart for that business of La Rochelle. I have often heard of it. One of my own ancestors was an officer of the fleet sent out with the succors which never reached the besieged ; I fear were never meant to reach. A bad business. His Majesty had bad advisers, and but too faithful servants. It nearly drove our family over to the wrong side. If it had not been for the civil wars and Oliver Cromwell, and the martyrdom of King Charles, I doubt whether we should have held our politics."

"It was a sad affair for us," Captain Godefroy replied. "It was among our nursery tales how the starving citizens of La Rochelle three times saw, with unutterable grief, the English fleet in the offing, and three times saw—what we had been used to think incredible—England baffled and driven back on her own element."

Amice looked up with one of her bright flashes of intelligence and sympathy.

"Your nursery tales must have been of a high order," she said.

"We had certainly no need to turn to stories of loup-garous and witches' caldrons for horrors," he said.

"And little need to turn to Greece and Rome for heroes," she replied.

He smiled one of those rare smiles of his, which came from sources as deep as his sorrows and the courage which bore them.

"We ought to have gained some spiritual muscle," he said, "in pulling two hundred years against the stream."

"You can understand, Madame," he continued, "since you care for our history, how the Revolution, which has proved in many ways such a desolation, seemed to us a deliverance."

This was certainly a little difficult for Madam Glanvil to admit. Except for the amends she felt due for the miscarriage of her ancestors' expedition at La Rochelle, she could scarcely have let it pass.

"Time was beginning to set things right before the Jacobins took it in hand," she said, grimly. "And some of your forefathers were not altogether without turbulence."

"For a hundred years," he replied, "we had many rich, and many noble among us, and we fought for our rights. Would you have had it otherwise?" he asked, not without stratagem, for Madam Glanvil would certainly not have done otherwise. If her theories were for non-resistance,

her sympathies were undoubtedly with those who resisted.

"Little good came of it," she said, evasively, applying to her snuffbox.

"So, many of us felt," he replied. "After 1685, the year of the Revocation, we were poor, and for the most part of lowly station, like the Apostles. Our rich men had escaped to enrich England and Germany. Our nobles were exiles. Some of them, Madame, did fight, not ignobly, in your armies. Our congregations assembled in deserts and caves at the risk of fusillades. Our pastors were consecrated, as they knew, to the 'vocation of martyrdom.' But our pastors preached submission, and our people, for the most part, to the utmost limit of endurance (the rising of the Cevennes being ended), practiced it."

Amice had laid aside her work, and was gazing far away.

"I weary you with my old histories," he said softly.

"No," she said; "I was only thinking of the West Indian slaves. If some of your people could have taught them the lessons of patience, they would have come with force from such lips."

He paused.

"You have West Indian property?" he said earnestly. "In St. Vincent a plantation was left to me. Once I wished to take charge of it and prevent some of the evils there; and afterwards I often regretted I had not. I thought I had

missed my vocation. But scarcely lately," he added, as if to himself.

This little interlude took place in very rapid words, while Madam Glanvil was expressing her divided state of mind by vigorously poking the fire.

"You should have kept to the old track," she said at last. "The pasteurs were wiser than the democrats. Revolution could do nothing for you."

"Not quite nothing," he demurred; "but it promised much. You will remember it is not forty years since in the Catholic churches at Toulouse they celebrated with pomp the anniversary of the St. Bartholomew of the south. It is not forty years since the Pasteur Rochette was hanged, and three gentlemen of Languedoc were beheaded at Toulouse for religion, or since poor old Calas, by long-since-disproved calumny—accused of the murder of his son for turning Catholic—was broken on the wheel, and took two hours dying. 'I die innocent,' he said. 'Jesus Christ, innocence itself, willed to die by torments yet more cruel.' The Catholic priests who attended him on the scaffold confessed, 'Thus in old times died our martyrs.' Voltaire pleaded for his memory. In three years the sentence was annulled, and fanaticism to that extent was never possible again. At least," he added sadly, "fanaticism upheld by the Church and the law. The fanaticism of mobs is a hurricane no one can provide against."

"Léontine says always that all our people die

well," interposed Claire, who happened to be present. "Of our king also, and Madame Elizabeth, may it not be said, 'Thus in old times died our martyrs?'"

"Ah, Mademoiselle," he replied, "if you could know how eagerly we, who have been so long accustomed to be banished outside our national history as proscribed and outlaws, take up and claim the heroic traditions we have in common with all our countrymen! To be exiled *in France*, as we were, was in some respects harder than to be exiled *from* it. To understand our isolation," he continued, "you must remember it is not thirty years since one of our pastors died in prison for religion, in La Brie. And it is not fifteen years," he concluded, his voice dropping to its deepest tones, and tremulous with feeling, "since all professions were closed to us and all means of livelihood except trade, or farming; since our marriages were illegal, our children unrecognized as lawful, the rites of Christian burial of our dead forbidden to us. It was only in 1787 that marriage and burial were permitted us. Was it wonderful that we welcomed the dawn of the Revolution?"

"Ah, monsieur," said tender-hearted Claire, breaking down into tears, "I wonder at nothing in our poor France. My mother taught me that. Only I like to think that we, of the Catholic noblesse, and our king, did a little to help you before we fell. In 1787, when these your wrongs were

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"Nobody doubts that your king Louis was a
saint, or fit to be one," Madam Glanvil said; "if
he was not a sage."

Madam Glanvil was a little impatient always
with tears. Amice had not used her to them.
Their race was of the kind from which wrong
does not draw tears, but strikes fire; such fire as
was at that moment flashing from Amice's eyes.

A little storm was gathering.
Captain Godefroy dispersed it.

"Mademoiselle," he said to Claire, "it was a
happy moment for us when the aged Paul Rabaud
preached the first sermon in the first temple
granted us, at Nismes, when the women who had
faded from youth to grey hairs, in the prisons of
Aigues Mortes were set free. It was a proud
moment for us Protestants when Rabaud St.
Etienne, himself ordained, at twenty, a pastor of
the persecuted Church, grandson of our noble
Paul Rabaud, who had been from youth to past
middle age a hunted *Pasteur du Désert* was
nominated President of the General Assembly of
France, and said there to all the nation, 'My
country is free. Let her show herself worthy of
liberty by declaring that the very word *tolerance*
shall be proscribed—that unjust word which repre-
sents religious differences as crimes.' But it was a
moment which touched a deeper chord when the
grandson of the persecuted pleaded for the life of

the great-grandson of the persecuter. We could not silence the clamors which drowned the dying words of our king. We could only thank God for him that he died patient, calm, and believing as any of those forefathers of our religion, whose dying words had been similarly silenced long before."

"For me," he resumed, "I have indeed, hoped too much, from every direction. I hoped from the National Assembly, with Rabaud St. Etienne at its head; I hoped from the Republic; did it not proclaim liberty and brotherhood? I hoped from Napoleon Bonaparte; did he not declare that 'the empire of the law ceases where the empire of conscience begins?' I hoped the old hatreds were to die out between class and class, between faith and faith, between nation and nation. My politics, therefore, are little worth any one's attending to."

"Yet," said Amice softly, "you would not wish to have hoped less."

"No!" he said; "to hope all and lose all is better, infinitely better than to hope nothing and lose nothing. Is not hope itself something?"

So in many a talk by the fireside, in garden and woodland walks, the summers and winters wore on towards 1805. And all the while Amice's life and mine were separating and gathering around different centres.

More and more the conversation, when we were all together, used to be between Captain Godefroy and Madam Glanvil. With Amice he had reach-

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The different types of their religion, as of their
characters, fulfilled each other wonderfully.

With her religion meant forgiveness, love, the
forgiving Father, the Incarnate and atoning Son;
the loving, healing, softening Spirit; the recon-
ciled, happy, obedient child.

With him it meant power, majesty, truth, jus-
tice, the Sovereign to whom the profoundest loyal-
ty, unlimited self-sacrifice, and unhesitating obedi-
ence were due; at whose lips we were to question
nothing, from whose hand we were to submit to
everything, in whose heart-searching presence a lie
was impossible, on whose awful altar of truth life
was a light offering; the soldier sworn, as a matter
of course, to die at his post; the subject ready, as
a matter of course, to seal his loyalty with life.

His hereditary faith was that masculine Calvin-
ism which has been the religion of so many strong
intellects, of so many free nations, and of so many
heroic hearts; the faith in a Supreme Will, su-
preme and unalterably just, which must conquer
all wills, must be accepted, at whatever cost to rea-
son or heart, must be obeyed, at whatever cost to
heart or life; the faith which in men has combined
as much of daring and duty; in woman, of devout-
ness and heroism; in nations, of law and liberty,
as any in the world.

Amice's faith was rather in the Supreme Love
which must conquer all hearts.

Both met and fulfilled each other's faith in that redeeming Cross where Divine Love suffered to the utmost for man, and one human will gave itself to the utmost to God.

Both met and fulfilled each other's life in that lifelong service of the oppressed, to which they devoted themselves; every act and sacrifice of which, God, in giving them to each other, made for them, step after step, from light into fuller light, on and on, as we believe, for ever.

I cannot think or speak of that deep, perfect, ennobling love of theirs, except with the same gravity and reverence as I think of their religion. There were no misunderstandings, no fluctuations, no flashes of surprise in it. Their hearts were open all through to each other.

And at last, one morning in the winter before the battle of Trafalgar, Madam Glanvil said to Amice, as Amice was rubbing her chilled feet by her bedroom fire (the old lady went out little now, and grew less arbitrarily deaf, and submitted sometimes to be a little petted and caressed), "I do not think Captain Godefroy has any wife or children, after all."

"I never thought he had, Granny," said Amice.

"I suppose, now, there is no help for it," Madam Glanvil rejoined; "and he may as well continue to come here as before." Which was Madam Glanvil's sanction to Amice's engagement.

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And the next day she wore on her finger a chased gold ring, with a sapphire in it, which Captain Godefroy's mother had been used to wear on her wedding finger.

And Captain Godefroy ventured to salute the stately old lady's cheek; whereupon, rising from her high-backed chair (she still scorned an easy-chair), and taking his two hands in hers, she said, "You will understand her better, and be better to her than I have been. She is a good child, but a true Glanvil; perhaps not altogether the worse for that; certainly not the worse for being something besides. I never thought to have given one of our house to a Frenchman. But, after all, we were all Norman once; and it was a chance that your forefathers did not come over with us, or even your father himself, in that emigration of the six hundred only sixty years ago. If they had, or he had, there would have been no difficulty; and I do not know that we ought to let a chance like that keep you apart. At all events, I suppose it is too late," she concluded, with a little dry smile, "for an old woman's word to keep you apart now; you seem to have taken the matter into your own hands. So I may as well do like the rest of the wise despots, pretend to command by willing what you will."

And so saying, she took Amice's hand also in hers, and held them together one moment, and then, not without some quivering of lips and tot-

tering of limbs, but declining all sympathy or assistance, she left them together, and went slowly up the old oak stairs alone to her chamber.



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CHAPTER XXXII.

MADAM GLANVIL never walked down that old staircase again.

Often, afterwards, with unreasonable self-reproach of love, when death has made love sacred, and unable any more to serve, she would blame herself for not assisting or helping her grandmother up the stairs that night.

"The first time for years and years I had not gone with her, first following as a child, and then, in after years, supporting her, and always waiting for the kiss at the door! Even during the year of our silence—('which was indeed my fault,' she would say, 'all my fault, all my pride, my ungenerous misunderstanding!') And not even to have seen her go up that last evening! In my selfish happiness, taking her at her word, when I ought to have known, and distrusted and disobeyed. She would have been pleased. And I can never do anything to please her more."

Tender trifles of everyday life, little unnoticed habits of love, which at any moment may give a shattering shock to our inmost being, simply by being stopped!

And I, not knowing yet the austere sincerity of grief, would vainly try to excuse and comfort her.

But Hervé Godefroy understood grief, and Amice better; the truthfulness of her nature, and also the terrible truthfulness of sorrow. And he let her grieve, grieving with her. He knew that such pain cannot be stilled, that the wound must have its anguish, if it is not to mortify, and spread the touch of death throughout the whole being; that, so the anguish may work itself into the whole heart, making it soft and deep and tender, patient and pitiful.

The very night of Amice's betrothal, the blow had come, that direct destruction of power, as if by the smiting paralysis of an irresistible hand, without warning or pain, which we call a "stroke."

In the morning, Amice waited some time for her grandmother's appearance (Madam Glanvil having great scorn of aid in her toilet to the last, so that no one ventured to intrude on her privacy until she rang); until at last she became alarmed, and rushing up the stairs, knocked softly at the chamber door.

An answer came, gentle and faint; and entering, she found her grandmother unable to move, although her speech was happily unaffected.

Dr. Kenton when summoned thought the case very serious; and he hinted that one of the gravest

symptoms was the—"might he say?—unnatural gentleness and placability of the patient."

But this Amice would not admit. She was persuaded, she told me, though she did not say so to Dr. Kenton, that this gentleness had been growing for some time, and that it was due not to paralysis, but to John Wesley's "Thoughts on Slavery," and to the use of the General Confession.

Yet she was not consistent with herself, for when I acquiesced, she burst into tears, and forgetting the moral source to which she had insisted on attributing Madam Glanvil's softened demeanor, she murmured, "Oh, if I could only hear Granny scold us all heartily once more!"

It was a vain wish.

Madam Glanvil retained to the last her objections to "scenes"—to anything melo-dramatic; otherwise, I believe, she would have found consolation in summoning all the household (including first of all Cato, and Cæsar, and Chloe), or, indeed, all Abbot's Weir around her bed, and telling them how hasty and proud she felt she had often been, and how, terrible as it had been at first to lie smitten and helpless—she felt it happy, at last, to submit and lie low beneath the Hand that had brought her down.

But, as it was, she did nothing but be patient, and said little but to thank every one for every little kindness—or now and then, when she thought herself alone, or alone with A . . . , which was just

the same—to thank God and ask Him not to let her be impatient—and often to breathe the name of Jesus, and say how much more He had suffered, Himself once helpless as she was, unable to move hand or foot, but also unable to hide His face from the mocking, prying crowd, while she could still move one arm—and saw around her nothing but love, and reverence, and pity.

She took no farewells, except only of poor Chloe. And that was the longest confession she made, of sin, or of faith. Taking Chloe's black hand with the one hand she could use, she looked at Amice and said—

“You took good care of her. She will take care of you and yours. I am going where people are not divided into black and white, or into slave or free. All free there. Perhaps one day all free here. You will come, and are sure to be welcomed on the right hand. Forgive me for hasty words, and pray that He may forgive, and that I may not be told to depart. *Saviour of all, make us all free, that we may be free indeed.*”

To which poor Chloe could only reply by sobbing protestations of devotion and gratitude, and assurances that missis would get well, or be sure to have some high place in heaven, far above such as she, except for what the blessed Lord had done for all alike.”

For Chloe had no objection at all to differences of glory in heaven, and could never quite get over a feeling that white people who, having all they

could want, and being able to read and write, were humble enough to become Christians, must have some higher reward by-and-by, than black people, who being slaves, and having nothing that they wanted, naturally fled to the pitiful Saviour, as a hunted animal to its covert, because they could not help it.

But when Chloe was led sobbing from the room, she said to Amice—

"She will never live, missie! Poor dear missis! So like a lamb! so sweet and meek! She sees everything too dim and too clear. No difference between black and white! Poor dear missis, 'tis terrible!—and asking me to pray for her! As if the dear Lord could not hear her better than me!—me who talk like a baby, and she who talks like a book."

"God gives the best things to the babes," Amice said; "and Jesus told us to be like the children. So pray, Chloe! Pray!"

"Do you think, missie, poor Chloe has got to begin now to pray for poor dear missis? When missis called us lazy brutes and uglier still, need to pray then! But now she so sweet, like a lamb! Nothing to ask, nothing to do, but praise the Lord night and day, and cry like a child."

Madam Glanvil spoke little, but once again she murmured, "*Thou Saviour of all, make us all free, that we may be free indeed.*" Strangely the simple words struck to Amice's heart; they were the last in those "*Thoughts of John Wesley on*

Slavery," which her grandmother had once thrown angrily into the fire.

So, all through that summer and autumn of 1805, the shadow of death lay on the old house at Court, and a high and brave spirit was slowly divesting itself of much that cannot be carried on that lonely journey; having already put away all sense of property, except as a provision for those who are left below, and now laying aside pride, and hard judgment, and much prejudice, that so, when the last step came, nothing might be left but to commend herself, bare and destitute, but redeemed and reconciled, confidently, into the Father's hands.

Following the slowly departing spirit along that silent solemn way, those in the old house had little thought to spare for the tumults in the world around; although, as winds and storms swept and wailed through the woods, and battered and cannonaded the old house with noisy display of force (so feeble compared with the silent foe within), all, except the sufferer, knew too well that a fiercer storm of war and peril was raging around England. The fleets of Nelson and Villeneuve were being tossed and driven by those autumnal gales.

Never, men said, since the Armada threatened England, had her peril been as great as now.

Once more, as we all knew (and for the last time, which we knew not), Napoleon Bonaparte was menacing us on the shores of France, and

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with him the Grand Army, a hundred and thirty thousand men, with transports ready to convey them. "Give me command of the Channel for twelve hours," he said, "*et l'Angleterre aura vécu.*" And, meantime, Admiral Villeneuve, who was to give him that command, and Nelson, who was to restrain Villeneuve, were wandering, we knew not where, on the high seas. We only knew that the French fleet had gone to the West Indies, and Nelson after it, with a far inferior force, which numerical inferiority, however, in itself, gave us little uneasiness.

The first good news we received was that Villeneuve and his ships, driven by Nelson from the West Indies, and then missed by him, had been encountered by Sir Robert Calder cruising in the Channel, with at least this result of victory, that the French fleets had to abandon the protection of the flotilla intended to transport the invaders, and the Emperor withdrew with the Grand Army to carry on the war in Germany. For which service England, accustomed to naval victories more undeniable, administered in a lofty way rather rebuke than thanks to Sir Robert Calder.

Napoleon had withdrawn. But we were still in uncertainty as to the destination of the French and Spanish fleets. Nelson, shattered by his harassing pursuit of Villeneuve, was taking his last rest in his country house, when the news reached him that Villeneuve was safe, in a trap, at Cadiz. The irresistible call of patriotism touched his heart

once more, he offered his services to the Admiralty, and, on the 22d of September, arrived at Portsmouth, to take command of the fleet. Exultation and sorrow were strangely blent through England in that departure; as, a few weeks afterwards, when

“Home they brought her warrior, dead.”

We heard how the people crowded around him on the shore, not idly gazing, but weeping around him; and even kneeling to implore blessings on him. So he sailed, in the *Victory*, taking his coffin with him, made out of the mast of the *L'Orient*.

Two days afterwards Bonaparte left Paris for his campaign against Russia and Austria; and our statesmen began to feel stronger than for many years, believing that they had, at last, secured in the alliance recently concluded with Austria and Russia a powerful coalition against Napoleon. William Pitt was full of hope in this alliance; but the heart of England rested not so much on his alliances, as on himself; on himself, and on Nelson, her two mighty sons; little dreaming that neither of them was to be with us by the new year.

The times were perilous, indeed, for England; but with Pitt and Nelson to think and to fight for us, we felt the world no chaos. Rapidly indeed the thinking and the fighting were wearing out the heart and brain of the two on whom all Eng-

land was leaning. But this, in those days, we knew not. We had our Atlas and our Hercules; and they did their work cheerily and gallantly, as the heroes do, making little of it; while we little thought how heavily the world they bore up was pressing on the shoulders, or that the labors were draining away the life.

On the 21st of October, early in the morning, the long watching by the death-bed at Court was over. The hush of awe had succeeded to the hush of anxious watchfulness.

Amice had sent the weary nurses and servants to rest, and was left alone for a while beside her dead.

She opened the window, and listened to the flow of the river, and the sweep of the wind through the autumnal woods, and the song of a few robins, calm, autumnal, full of a quiet content, all rapture of love and hope long past. It was the first time she had looked on the outer world for so long! And now it seemed such a long way off, "altogether the *other* world," she said. "*My* world was the spiritual world, the unseen, where *she* had gone, where the spirit really always dwells, as unseen always as hers now. She was *near*; and God, and our Lord, and the loving Spirit. The woods, the old familiar garden, even the singing birds, were *far away*. I felt it once before, in a measure, when I knelt beside Chloe in the church on the New Year's Eve of the cen-

tury. The wind, the very sky, so pure and delicate in its morning tints, the birds, flowers, were material, mortal, corruptible. And she and I had always and had still what was incorruptible and faded not away. She has now that *only*. And in those first moments I felt her not *gone*, but brought nearer than ever before."

It seemed a time when barriers were broken down, and veils rent from the top to the bottom. The world grew larger and nearer, the struggling, sinning, suffering world, with God loving it. And then two things came before her like visions. The French and English fleets, which Hervé Godefroy said he thought must ere long be joined in battle, the human beings, countrymen of hers and of his, fighting and struggling for the mastery and dying there; and the slaves in the West Indies, men, and women, and children, too surely driven that very morning to their hard, unbroken work with threats and blows. What a chaos, what an arena of wild beasts it seemed! And Granny was at rest beyond it all. But was God really loving all? English and French, slaves and slaveholders? And was dying, indeed, to go and be with Him, with Christ, who had seen the world and its battles, not from above only, but from *within*, from *beneath*—borne down in the battle, bruised, smitten, slain?

If then God loved the world, those with Him must love the world, and if He could bear to

look at it, having created it, and loved it so much as to give his Son for it; *so could they.*

What then made them able to bear to look on the world, and looking to love it, seeing its evils in all the sweep of the wide horizon without its dimness; feeling its evils as those feel a fetid atmosphere who have been all but stifled in it and have escaped from it, and know what pure air is, and breathe freely?

What makes it possible for any of us to bear the sight of suffering in those dear to us? What could it be but *hope*? Hope of healing and purification through suffering; hope of rescue at any cost for the lost; hope learned from Him who not only loved the world enough, through all its sinning, to give Himself for it, but hoped for it enough to deem the joy set before Him of saving it from its sin well worth the Cross?

They through hope able to be patient; we through patience learning to hope.

What then are they caring for?

In its measure for every conflict, it seemed to Amice, against wrong, and injustice, and oppression *without*.

Supremely, for every conflict against sin and selfishness *within*.

For this terrible European war, then, in its measure, as far as truth and justice are involved in it.

Surely, for the struggle, through English law, against the great wrong of slavery.

Supremely, for the struggle, through Christ's Gospel, against sin and despair *in the slave and in the master.*

To this last she had consecrated herself five years before; when that high and prejudiced spirit, latterly so clear and softened, had been the only obstacle to the service. To this, beside that lifeless form, she consecrated herself again, as, absolutely and without reserve what the softened and lowly spirit which but that morning had departed, must now be caring for most on earth. The only obstacle now in her path was the great love which made life so precious.

Should she let that great gift of God be a hindrance to obeying His call?

She made no vow, she only knelt beside the pale, placid, impassive face, and repeated once more the words she had uttered a few hours before, responded to, then, with that last gaze, that wistful gaze not fixed any longer on her, or on anything on earth.

"Father, into Thy hands I commend my spirit; into Thy hands to guide, mould,—into Thy hands, absolutely, without reserve, to do with me what Thou wilt."

Then, rising, she went down stairs.

It was daylight now, though not in the darkened house. She went into the dining-room, and at the sight of the high old empty chair daily life came back to her, with the new great blank, and

the reality of the greater blank and sacrifice before her, yet. She had not been there long when Hervé Godefroy came.

And as he drew her to him, through her tears she said at once, not daring to delay,—

“The only obstacle duty placed in the way of that great duty you and I have recognized so long is gone. Tell me, what shall I do? You come of a race long used to give up its best to God.”

It was evidently no new effort to him to measure what that duty might cost.

For, holding both her hands in his, and pressing them against his heart, and looking down into her tearful eyes, he said,—

“The like sacrifices were required of us for generations. But with us it was the women that risked the dearest, and the men only themselves. I see now how much greater their sacrifice than ours.”

“You see I must go,” she said, “and soon.”

Then she led him up into the chamber of death. For a few moments they stood together there. And then, as they stood again together by the fire-side beside the stately old empty chair, he said,—

“I see, my love; I know. We will go, in spirit at least, not apart but together. Our life here is but a moment of our life. And, whatever the moment be, the *life* shall be together, for Him and with Him forever.”

They did not speak of her return. That hope was too precious, and too precarious to utter.

And thenceforth their only thought was how to lighten the separation to each other.

So that first day of death passed at the old darkened house at Court; not altogether dark; a day of death, but a day of duty fulfilled, of victory won.

And, all the time, that terrible day of victory and of death was wearing away at Trafalgar.

There, Nelson, smitten to death for England, was still inspiring Englishmen to victory. Wounded to death by a shot from a ship his humanity had twice spared, supposing she had struck, his face lighted up through all his agony, as cheer after cheer from his crew announced that another French or Spanish ship had surrendered.

Duty, not glory, was the glorious mark he had set before his men; sacrifice of self for England, let England's recognition of the sacrifice be what it might.

And at the last he thanked God that he had done that duty; not more; only "that which was his duty to do;" his country had a right to all; not more than duty, but he hoped *not less*.

Weeping from end to end when she heard it, England responded that he had; scarcely able to smile as he had smiled in dying; at the victory he had won for her; since he who had won it was dead.

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CHAPTER XXXIII.

THE winter months that followed were dark indeed for us all ;—in the world of England, in our little world at Abbot's Weir.

The news of the surrender of the Austrian General Mack at Ulm, with his thirty thousand, had reached England more than a fortnight before that of Nelson's victory at Trafalgar ; and had struck the other great Englishman on whom we leaned, to the heart. Trafalgar seemed to make it yet possible for him to live. He struggled hard for life, and was often sanguine of recovery. But from the tidings of the union of the Russian and Austrian armies with Napoleon's, and of the coalition of Austerlitz, he never revived. The fatal news came to him in December, and in little more than a month—on the 23d of January, 1803—the great Minister, William Pitt, lay dead in his house at Putney. He was scarcely fifty years old. His friend Mr. Wilberforce said, "He died of a broken heart,"—broken for love of England. The last words we knew of him to have utter-

ed—"My country; oh, my country?"—rang like a death-wail throughout the land.

They had done their duty bravely, to the death, for England, those two Englishmen. Better loved, the country could never be again; nor more fearlessly and disinterestedly served.

We had great names still,—Collingwood, and Fox; and one we knew not yet, fighting and making order for us, far away in India. But these seemed to most of us in those days of mourning but of the second rank.

The heroes were gone, we thought, as men have thought so often. We had good and brave men left, but those whom we had lost had been something more.

Amice was in London by the end of December. She had gone to stay at Clapham, with her cousins, the Beckford-Glanvils; the present possessors of Court; to consult them about the arrangements for the property, and about her expedition to the West Indies.

Thus by war, and death, and absence, our little circle had dwindled sadly.

Piers still in that French village near Claire's old home; and for many months not a word of tidings from or about him. Dick Fyford, wounded at Trafalgar, and slowly making his way home; Amice away preparing to go to the West Indies, for no one knew how long; and Captain Godefroy, certainly not present with us in spirit; there was great need that we should "*server les*

rangs," thinned as they were, and press closer to each other, if we were to "press forward" at all. Which, while we live, has to be done, and therefore *can* be done—always.

The Sunday-school especially occupied us. My father himself had undertaken Piers' class of boys. He could not bear, to see anything Piers had begun languish or fall. He went to his Sunday task very meekly, and with a strong sense of his poverty in didactic power and dogmatic definitions, but as regularly as he went to his daily business, the business in which he missed Piers at every turn. I believe (so strong was the Paganism lurking under our Christian faith) that we should all have felt it ominous, like the unaccountable stopping of a watch, if any machinery set in motion by Piers had stopped. Whatever was laid aside, anything connected with him must be made to prosper. How deeply it used to go to my heart to see the dear grey head bending down among the boys; the teacher being quite as much in awe of them as they of him.

My impression was, that, as with us of old, he did not directly inculcate much, but drew out what his scholars thought and felt, making them give shape to many a vague thought, and unfolding many a repressed feeling, leading them unconsciously to plough and water their own ground; and then dropping in seed; very little seed, and often unperceived in its sowing, but none the less taking root, springing up after many years.

And when he felt his poverty deepest, he had recourse to the "Pilgrim's Progress," or occasionally to portions of "Robinson Crusoe," which never failed to interest them all, and make them children together, teacher and taught.

Claire meanwhile prospered greatly with Amice's infant class.

Moreover, our Sunday-school began to *grow* in many directions; for one, in the direction originally foreseen by the dames. The instruction of the week had to be brought more up to the level of the instruction of the Sundays. And it was seriously in my father's contemplation—which meant, seriously on the eve of fulfilment,—that Abbot's Weir should have a week-day school on the Lancasterian system, combined with some hints from Pestalozzi.

Thus were the most desponding Cassandras among the dames justified.

It was quite a serious battle. The French Reign of Terror was little more than a decade behind us. And my father was now proposing a measure even more revolutionary than any which had called forth accusations of sedition and atheism against Mrs. Hannah More. He proposed what she earnestly disclaimed, in a letter to one of her bishops. He actually proposed to teach the youth of Abbot's Weir—the youth of both sexes and all conditions—to *write*.

In vain Mrs. Danescombe warned, and Miss Felicity threatened. "The pen would banish the

housemaid's broom, would supersede the spade, the plough, the needle. In the next generation there would be no more maid-servants, washer-women, laundresses, or sempstresses."

"The men would write love-letters while the sheep were straying and the crops unsown; the maids would respond while the kettle was boiling over and the linen in rags. A deluge of correspondence would sweep away all honest work, and level all social distinctions."

"Mrs. Danescombe and Miss Felicity might not live to see it—they trusted not—nor poor dear Mr. Danescombe, who had opened the dykes on him, charity might hope that day of ruin might not dawn. On the one hand, Voltaire and Tom Paine and Jean Jacques Rousseau pouring in, through the sacrilegious breach of reading; on the other sedition and heresy, envy, malice, hatred and all uncharitableness,—and 'love-making' pouring out through the breach of writing? Our poor brave soldiers and sailors might as well give up the contest. Napoleon's army might be recalled from Boulogne, and his fleets lost at Trafalgar. But for England all was over. Over her it might indeed be written, 'England has lived.'"

Such were some of the murmurs of that stream against which, nevertheless, we pulled, not without success, though certainly not with the result of such a deluge of knowledge and such an universal fury of mental activity as was apprehended.

Uncle Fyford was neutral. The Sunday-school

had not been so Jacobinical as he had feared. Mr. Rabbidge was tolerant, but not encouraging. He had not seen any alarming passion for literature result from letters, as he had taught them.

Reuben's comment was reassuring.

"The good Lord," he said, "had mercifully sent the good corn through John Wesley and others, before He set folks on putting up the mills to grind it, or the ovens to bake it. The preaching had come before the teaching, the gospel before the spelling-book, the converting Spirit before the letter; and now the good words were there, the more schools there were to teach them, and the more pens to spread them the better."

Never was intercourse with Loveday Benbow more strengthening and hopeful than during those years of many changes and many perils.

War was to her altogether evil, inhuman, diabolical. To her all victories were darkened, as that one victory of Trafalgar was to all England, by the shadow of death. The roll of glory was written within and without, to her eyes, with lamentation, and mourning, and woe.

Self-sacrifice in dying she could understand to the utmost. Self-sacrifice resulting in killing she would scarcely place higher than a highwayman's generosity.

For Toussaint L'Ouverture starved in the dungeon at Joux, for Andrew Hofer, the patriot betrayed and shot she could weep. Over Nelson's

dying agonies, lighted up by shouts of victory, she could only shudder. But throughout and underneath the great national conflicts, the old warfare was going on with which her life was identified. On this (however we might, any of us, be turned aside by personal anxieties, or by literal battles on sea or land) Loveday's heart and eyes were steadfastly fixed.

Once more the abolition of the slave-trade had been brought before the House of Commons; and once more, after a large majority on the previous year, it had been thrown out. Yet this defeat did not discourage the best informed among its supporters.

At last, experienced eyes began to recognize an uncertainty and division in the enemy's ranks, as if they were on the point of breaking.

Not a few of the West Indian planters themselves began to waver. Some, moved by the conviction of the injustice of the trade, and others by a persuasion of its impolicy. Those who were watching closely detected a thousand subtle symptoms that public opinion was veering round. Many hearts were touched to the deepest indignation. Many consciences were aroused, if not to "godly repentance," at least to wholesome fear. The very presence of the whirlwind and the earthquakes of war, of the immeasurable perils threatening the country on so many sides were like the *guillotine en permanence* before the nations; and many began to ask what accursed thing we

might be harboring among us which might be blinding the eyes of our rulers, and weakening the arms of our soldiers.

The two great rival leaders, Pitt and Fox, were altogether one in their desire to redress this wrong. Pitt had supported it from the first; had (Mr. Clarkson said) been "steadfast to the anti-slavery cause from the beginning;" he had "vainly sought to enlist France for it in 1788," he had "fostered it in its infancy," unable, Mr. Clarkson believed, from "insuperable difficulties which could not be mentioned," to do more; he had given the weight of his unequalled eloquence to it again and again, and had at least "kept it from falling."

And now that Pitt had died without effecting the abolition, Mr. Fox took up the work more untrammelled than his predecessor, and sincerely determined to make its accomplishment one of the foremost objects of his policy.

What Nelson's grand battles were to England, every turn of the anti-slavery debates in Parliament was to Loveday. She felt sure that the days when fifty thousand helpless captives should be kidnapped year by year in Africa, and as many of them as survived the horrors of the voyage sold to fresh cruelties in the West Indies, were drawing to a close.

The very fervency of hope with which she looked forward to the approaching deliverance seemed too much for her sensitive and feeble frame. We had noticed with anxiety the gradual failing

of her strength, the increase of the worn, hollow look, which indicated sleepless nights, the reluctant abandonment of one little work after another. We scarcely dared to speak of these things to each other, or to her.

Miss Felicity, absorbed in her brother, did not seem to observe these downward steps at all. Physical, like moral infirmity, was to her a stain on the family honor, to be ignored as far as possible in adults, and to be rigorously repressed in the young. Moral and physical failure were, indeed, hopelessly entangled for her, by that one case in which she accepted and condoned all infirmities, moral, mental, and physical, as the ruins brought on *from without* on her suffering brother, by a wicked and seducing world.

Miss Felicity would have held it an insult for any one to inquire for her own health; she was doing strictly as she would have others do to her, in never prying into Loveday's. Having abandoned the struggle to make her well, the only remaining course was to let her alone, to be an invalid, in peace. If you could not fulfil your duty to your neighbor by being well, the less said about it the better.

Loveday had accepted the practice, and in part the theory. She never mentioned her own ailments; and I believe she looked on her weakness as a humiliation, and in some way a wrong, which she inflicted on her father and on her aunt. She accepted her couch of pain and helplessness as a

very low place, in the kingdom. She felt, I believe, that there must be some especially bad possibilities in her, from which God mercifully had saved through chastenings which He never willingly inflicted; and she acted as if she could never do enough for her father and Miss Felicity and the world in general, to make up for being such a burden on every one. And thus, accepting the lowest place, and never seeking to make it into a platform (such as can be made even out of poverty and pain, without the aid of vows or religious dress), all grace flowed naturally into her heart, and with it a sweet and calm content, and a glorious capacity for looking upward and enjoying a perpetual feast in the gifts and graces of all around her.

Once, I remember, she said to me, during those dark months of 1805,—

“How can I ever repay Aunt Felicity for all her care of my father, for doing all I ought to have done? My heart and mind have been free to take up the burden of the slaves. But she has been a slave all her life for me and mine. And that,” she added, “is what makes true church history so absolutely impossible. The deaths of martyrs and the deeds of philanthropists are seen and heard, and can be told; but who can tell the anguish of the homes from which the martyrs came, or the sacrifice of those whose quiet work at home made the public work possible?”

“Who, indeed,” I said, “can count the secret

fountains? Many may speak of our Amice by-and-by. But what would Amice, or any of us, have been without this little couch and all we have learnt here?"

Which observation, to avoid controversy, I had to follow up instantly by presenting her with a letter from Amice.

Amice was more enthusiastic about Clapham than I expected; not, certainly, about her cousins, the Beckford-Glanvils, but about mine.

"It does one good all through," she wrote, "to be in such a wind of good words, and such a current of good work. It seems to me all so English, this Clapham world—patient, practical, conservative, reforming, impatient of abuses, patient of precedent in removing them. English in a very high sense, not perhaps the very highest—not exactly the English of Shakspeare, or Bacon, or Milton, or John Howe, or John Wesley; not blind to the value of earthly good things, not at all, yet really holding them not as owners but as stewards,—well-salaried stewards certainly, but faithful. The giving is large; almost large, I think, in proportion to the living. It is certainly not a case of 'no purse, and only one coat,' nor of John Wesley's two silver spoons, and out of an income of thirty pounds a year giving two; out of an income of one hundred and twenty, ninety-two, the private expenditure fixed, the *giving* only increasing. That is not the ratio. I do not say it should be. I confess also that sometimes the

thousands of pounds subscribed do come out with a grand roll, as if they were equal to the "two mites," which, of course, they are not.

"Nor is the heroism so impressive, for instance as that of the French Huguenots, or of St. Paul.

"The ships are too well built and victualled to be liable to frequent shipwreck, or to "hungerings often."

"Nor does the literature strike me as likely to be immortal, except perhaps some sayings of Mr. Cecil's.

"Everything strikes me as being on the second level. No Luther, no Latimer; no genius, no martyrdom; no perils, no glories; no frightful ice-chasms, no dazzling snow-peaks, no spontaneous paradises of flowers among the ice-seas.

"After all, are not all second generations apt to be on the second level? Will it be different with the Methodists? Was it different with any of the Religious Orders? Was it different with the earliest Church? Must not the Church always be Protestant before it becomes Catholic? And becoming Catholic, in its midst must not new reformers have continually to rise and protest?

"But, this granted, *on this second level* work of the truest, conflict of the noblest, charity of the tenderest; a wide grasp of the evils of the world, and a determination to combat them; a close investigation into evils at home, and patient labor to remove them. Homes pure and tender, full of

Christian activity, and of generous charity, and of able, effective helpfulness as could be.

"And your cousins, Bride, are delightful. My heart warms through every time I enter the house. Harriet, "the Reformer" has set her heart on accompanying me to the West Indies. And I believe Mr. Crichton will allow it.

"A good, healthy, habitable working zone of the Church it is to live in.

"And yet, and yet, good as I feel the atmosphere to be, and healthy, my ideal is set a little higher and a little lower. You know you always thought me *tropical*. I want a little more sun, and a little more frost; a little more poverty in life; a little more up on the heights; a little more down among the sufferers.

"Well, we must have different zones.

"My Moravians, I think, will suit me. They are very 'still,' which gives space for the heart to rise in contemplation, and very 'plain,' which disencumbers for pilgrimage.

"A little band will, I believe, go out with me; a detachment of them to my father's estate. Mr. Crichton is a little apprehensive as to the 'soundness' of my Moravians. Indeed, a certain section of Clapham does seem to me as if it would be better for a little more of Nelson's childish experience. '*What is fear? I never saw fear.*' It is afraid of so many things—of mysticism, and Methodism, and Moravians, and rationalism, and 'reason,' and science, and society. It sees so many danger-

ous subjects. It is curious that on one point its courage is almost reckless. It is not at all afraid to encounter the peril of being rich. And yet, on the whole, there seems to me more in the New Testament about the peril of being rich than about the peril of any kind of curious opinions."

This was part of her letter to me. To Loveday she wrote:—

"The talking here is excellent and inspiring, but rather incessant. I shall be glad of a little 'stillness.' I want to listen, and look; and I want exceedingly not to be listened to and looked at so much, as if one were something wonderful. You have made me more than half a Quaker, Loveday, my friend of friends. I want some 'silent meetings.' I want to exercise myself by a good pull against the stream. Here one seems borne on the current. And I am afraid of merely drifting.

"The hour of deliverance from the slave-trade is, they say, fast approaching. I shall scarcely see it in England. But you will. And I shall feel it among my 'black mankind.' And we shall rejoice together."

I noticed that Loveday's eyes moistened, and her voice quivered, as she read aloud that last sentence.

"We shall certainly all feel it somewhere," she said; "and we shall certainly rejoice together. God knows where. And He knows best."

And in February Amice wrote me another letter:—

"I have seen the two great funerals," she said; "the mourners, all England. Not solemnity only and reverent silence was there when Nelson was borne through the crowded streets to St. Paul's, but weeping, and sobbing, and bitter lamentation.

"And in Westminster Abbey, little more than a month afterwards, England had to lay the other son in whom she trusted. Mr. Wilberforce, the friend of years, bore the banner before the coffin of William Pitt.

"Both Nelson and Pitt, so young! In the prime of life! Both worn out for England. What last words they have left echoing through every heart—

'My country, oh, my country!'

And the great motto—

'England expects every man to do his duty.'

What words to nerve and to inspire! *Country* and *duty*; and that '*expect*,' I delight in that. The very highest is but 'that which it was our duty to do.' What seed for heroic work in others!

"And yet, where are they, the heroes, now?

"Mr. Wilberforce is indeed a good soldier in a good fight. And I suppose the real heroes do have that easy, cheery look; not borne down by their labors, but bearing others up. And I suppose age after age has wailed the same death wail when its best were laid in the dust. In God's battles, I

know, leaders cannot fail. But for England? Where can she look now?"

She did not know that among the mourners around the grave of Pitt was Arthur Wellesley, just returned from the Mahratta war, and his victories at Assay.



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CHAPTER XXXIV.

ANXIETIES deepened on us in our little home-world, as well as in our world of England.

Francis had not prospered, as had been predicted, at the university. Every one had expected much of him, and he of himself. But he had simply glided through; and, at the end of the second year, rumors had reached my father of debt.

He questioned me, and made me tell all that Piers had done to save Francis, for so long. I had never seen him so roused.

"Debt, to the middle classes, is like cowardice to a soldier," he said. "A man who has the habit of it—who does not mind it as long as it only inconveniences other people—has lost all backbone and muscle. He has done with living, and can only be dragged and pushed through life at other people's cost."

He reproached himself.

"Euphrasia, you were right!" he said, "I have been blind in refusing to recognize the evil."

But Mrs. Danescombe endeavored to excuse.

"They are *gentlemanly* debts, Mr. Danescombe," she said. "It *is* a comfort that my poor Francis has not degraded himself by throwing himself away on low associates. You see, his tastes are all so refined. Books, Mr. Danescombe. He was always so particular, poor fellow, about the bindings of his books. And no doubt these young noblemen and gentlemen of fortune he has written about, who were so pleased to come to his rooms, could not be entertained quite like ordinary people. He will learn the value of money in time. He was always open-handed."

My father shook his head.

"Euphrasia, for heaven's sake," he said, "let us call things by their right names. If it had been a young man's careless generosity, I would have had more hope. To give to equals or inferiors may, at least, be *giving*. To get into debt, to entertain people above us, is simply *bargaining* and swindling—buying a position we have no right to with money we have no right to. It is the sin of the Pharisee and of the publican combined."

"But this once we must give him a chance," she pleaded to him.

"The only chance," my father said, "is to let him feel the weight; to let him feel that these easy, good-natured, selfish habits are tying and binding him with chains more difficult to bear, in the end, than it is to say 'no' in the beginning."

"But these gentlemen who have accommo-

dated him," she said. "It would be such a disgrace!"

"Gentlemen!" exclaimed my father. "Let it be a disgrace. It *is* a disgrace. I will pay the butchers, and bakers, and laundresses. The gentlemen may abandon him, and wait."

He was not to be moved. The rock at the basis of his nature was reached, and nothing would make him yield.

My stepmother turned to me.

A new tie began to spring up between us.

She wept, and bewailed herself and Francis, and thanked Piers and me for what she called our generosity; and—which touched me most—she said all might be right yet, if only Piers could come back.

The ice-crust between us was altogether broken.

I used to sit for hours with her in the oak parlor, listening to her, and trying to respond in a way which would not wound her.

We had the whist-parties, and the tea-parties, as usual, and she was more than usually complaisant and attentive to every one.

She kept up all the old forms of entertainment. She was so afraid Abbot's Weir should scent out anything wrong about Francis.

But, afterwards, she would give way altogether, and declare she was a monster to be able to seem unmoved when that precious boy was perhaps starving, or in prison.

I felt very sure that starving would not be the form in which Francis would suffer debt to press upon him. But a debtors' prison was by no means an unreal, or a very tolerable, dread in those days.

It made my heart warm towards Francis just to feel how she loved him, and to her to feel how she could love.

The self-reproaches which I had inflicted on myself in my childhood, sitting at my sewing, on that window-seat, came back to me.

Surely, I, thought, if I had loved my step-mother more, and Francis, things would have been better. I should have penetrated to her heart sooner. We should have been more united as a family, and more able to help each other.

And yet the excuses with which she excused him to herself were as repugnant to me as to my father.

At last one morning came a letter in the laboriously neat handwriting of an uneducated person, addressed to Piers, with "Urgent" on the cover.

After a little hesitation my father opened it, and to his perplexity found it signed in our family name—"Dionysia Danescombe." Slowly the meaning dawned on him. It was from some one calling herself the wife of Francis. "He had wished the marriage to be concealed from his family for a time," she said, "desiring to tell his father himself."

She had consented. She wished now she had not. Her father, also, had objected. His family

had lived for generations in the village. They had a little farm and a general shop, and he did not like marriages with gentlefolks. They had been hasty and wrong, she feared. But Mr. Francis Danescombe had told her everything was sure to come right, and every one was sure to come round. Now, however, everything had gone wrong. Some of the creditors had found out the marriage, and had refused to wait any longer; and Francis was in prison, and her father was very angry. He had never had any wish for his daughters to marry gentlefolks, but if they *were* gentlefolks, they must prove it, he said, by paying their debts; and she had always heard Piers was kind; and she did not know what to do but to write to him. She was sure every one would help poor Mr. Francis Danescombe, when they knew.

To my surprise, my father was less disturbed than my stepmother about this letter.

"Impertinent creature," she said, "to dare call herself my Francis's wife!"

"It is certainly no consolation if she is not," my father replied. "But I have no doubt she is. The letter is honest and straightforward enough. The poor child, no doubt, thinks Francis comes of the race of Croesus; and she has, I fear, the worst of the bargain. It is a sad affair. But it may teach them something."

"*Them*, Mr. Danescombe!" she exclaimed, bursting into tears, "you never surely mean to acknowledge such a connection. That my poor boy

should be tied for life to a creature that cannot fold or seal a letter properly !”

“My dear,” he replied, “if the law acknowledges the connection, what can we do? The question, at present, seems to be to acknowledge the debt. And, indeed,” he continued, endeavoring to console her, “I think there is a cheerful side to the affair. The father, you see, did not wish it, which looks respectable. And he is a village shop-keeper and yeoman ;—not one of the rich university tradesmen, who prey on young graduates. And a debtors’ prison is the kind of lesson our poor Francis is not likely to forget.”

Every article in my father’s pleading was, I felt, telling the other way with Mrs. Danescombe.

“Indeed, Mr. Danescombe, I shall never be able to understand you,” she said. “What consolation there is in the poor deluded boy’s having made a low marriage (which I do not for a moment believe he has) ; and if he has, what comfort there is in her father being not only a tradesman but poor ; and least of all, how you can think any good is to come of his being in a debtors’ prison, you cannot expect me to comprehend. I confess I think this is not a subject for pleasantry.”

“Pleasantry, my dear !” he exclaimed. “I never felt anything more serious or less pleasant in my life. But the most serious thing of all is the wretched habit which brought the poor boy to it. I was only trying to hope that might yet be cured.”

"Wretched habits!" she said. "You talk as if Francis had been given to drinking or any other vice, when he has not a fault, but that his temper is too easy and his habits too refined."

My father gave up the debate, with a sigh. And then he sat down at once at his escritoire, and began to write a letter.

"To whom are you writing?" Mrs. Danescombe asked.

"To the girl's father," he replied, "to find out the truth and see what can be done."

"You mean to believe all that creature writes!" she said, "and to leave my poor son to bear the suspense and misery?"

"My dear," he said very gently, "if it is not true, let us hope Francis is not in prison; and if it is, what better way is there of helping him out?"

The letter was sealed and dispatched.

And every morning after it was at all possible an answer should arrive, my father, calm as he tried to be, went himself to the coach for the letters. And I with him.

On the third morning, the coach had already arrived, and there was a little stir and crowd around the door.

When we came there was a buzz of sympathy, and way was made for us at once. A tall, spare, bronzed young man, partly turned from us, was helping to lift a wounded person of some kind into the inn parlor.

A little subdued moan came from the sufferer, and then a cheery word of thanks from a well-known voice.

And in another moment my father and I were standing with our own Piers, hand in hand, beside poor Dick Fyford, lamed at Trafalgar, and only landed, owing to some accidents of weather, the day before, on our coast.

"Picked him up at sea," said Dick, indicating Piers.

With which vague vision of Piers floating from Lorraine to England on some ancient Ocean River, we had for the time to be content; cousin Dick himself being the first subject of attention.

How content we were, I recollect to-day as distinctly as if that were yesterday. It was like springing straight from the breakers to the fireside. The whole world became *terra firma* once more. Everything, I was persuaded, must go right now; the French war; the abolition of the slave trade; Francis his and debts and marriage; Amice and her love, and her work for her slaves; Abbot's Weir, England, the world. And all because that one parting was over!

So long ago! So many partings since, without meeting again! Without the meeting again *yet*. And now, at last, so near the meetings; so nearly past all the partings, at least the partings *from being left behind*, is it any wonder my heart should bound sometimes, more like a happy child's than an old woman's? Is it any wonder that looking

back to that return of my brother, the tears of joy come into my eyes again, while I feel now it was nothing but a shadowy glimpse and a momentary vision of what is to come, and is not to pass away?





CHAPTER XXXV.

THERE were so many in want of help in our little world when Piers came back to us, that there was little time to discuss his own adventures. Besides Piers's genius was not exactly narrative. For many years some casual incident or remark would continue to bring out new fragments in his French experiences, but it was not in his way to make himself the hero of a consecutive autobiographical story. We had to put our "Odyssey" together as best we could out of stray allusions and episodes.

On one point he insisted persistently ; and this was, that he owed his escape to Claire, to the easy, idiomatic French into which we had naturally fallen with her from childhood, and to the friendly aid of the people who remembered her family, in reaching the coast.

It was a fresh link between these two to have that *terra incognita* to all besides, the scenes of Claire's childhood, familiar ground to them.

Moreover, in those three years, the world of books had opened on Piers.

He had picked up fragments of the old libraries of the gentlemen of Port Royal, classical and mathematical, in farmhouses near the desolated abbey. He had found a safeguard from restless regrets and wishes in sharpening his mind against old mathematical problems. In his banishment from those he loved and could serve in the present, the great men of the past, workers and thinkers had come near to him; the life of the past had become a reality, and a school to him; and he came back to us with the bracing and bronzing of Greece and Rome on his mind, as his face was browned and bronzed by the suns which had ripened the vineyards and corn-fields of France.

In religious reading, he had been limited to a Port Royal copy of the Greek Testament, and to Pascal, so that in those years the incrustations and petrifications of Mr. Rabbidge's "letters" had been pierced in many directions by living springs of thought.

But this, like the rest, came out in glimpses. The first obvious and certain discovery was that our healer and helper had come back to us, and that we had immediate need of him.

His first labor was to extract Francis from prison, and to extract from him the truth concerning his debts and his marriage.

Piers did not indeed find Francis in one of the miserable dungeons in which John Howard had discovered the prisoners for debt twenty years before. The walls had been whitewashed, and

some of the more obvious and fatal grievances had been removed; but he found him penned in with a forlorn company composed partly of destitute creatures fallen there through wrong and misfortune, and feeling the humiliation and helplessness bitterly, and partly of reckless men brought there by vice, and minding it very little, as long as they could gamble with each other, or bribe the jailer to get them such food and drink as they cared for.

Francis was depressed and remorseful. He regretted his debts, and rather repented his marriage. He felt he had lowered himself; but at the same time he felt the punishment so far beyond his deserts, that he was half disposed to regard it as a wrong, for which the only *amende* his family could offer him was to pay his debts, and to enable him to make his married life as comfortable as circumstances would admit.

"If you had been here, my dear fellow," he said pathetically to Piers, "it would never have come to this."

He had undoubtedly, he admitted, been too "open-handed," but at the same time "he could not but be sensible that much of the result had been the consequence of his father's being a little unsympathetic, and of the scandalous detention of the Ten Thousand by Napoleon Bonaparte."

He felt himself a prodigal son indeed, but arrived at a very touching and hopeful point of his career. He had come to the husks. He found

them unsatisfactory. He was ready to return. And no doubt his family were ready and even eager to receive him. None of them, he felt sure, were like the Pharisees. Piers was not a brother to begrudge the fatted calf. And thenceforth there was no danger of his trying the husks any more.

The parable was complete, with one omission.

The "*father, I have sinned*" was not there.

Although outwardly certainly much in the prodigal's position, Francis seemed inwardly to have a great deal more resemblance to the Pharisee.

He acknowledged that he had made mistakes. He had been too careless. But after all, at bottom he felt himself a person of finer tastes and of a better heart than those who had stayed in the father's house, and had got into no scrapes. He had moreover, been reading religious books. He felt that he had lived hitherto in too legal a spirit. He had not apprehended the mercy of God, the freeness of pardon, and the imputation of righteousness. There was something very affecting in the very illustration afforded by his present position. His father would pay the debt, and he would be liberated. But he should go out of prison an altered man, ready to take his degree, and to preach, he trusted, not without effect, as soon as he could be ordained.

At this proposition Piers was infinitely dismayed.

To him those words, which glided so smoothly

from the lips of Francis, were such profound realities; and so inseparably united with other great moral realities of which Francis seemed to have no conception!

Sin, as the one evil of the world; Divine Love spending itself in redeeming agonies to rescue from sin; giving itself perpetually in discipline which wounded and probed, in pardons which bound up and healed, to raise the fallen soul from the slough of selfishness up to itself—were so engraven on his heart—that to see any one grasping at the pardon not as a call back to the heart of the Father, but as an escape from the discomfort of regret, was to him the most terrible profanation.

His greatest hope was in Francis's marriage. He thought Mrs. Dionysia a young woman of considerable will and shrewdness; and he was inclined to believe, that once convinced that a certain income had to suffice, she would have conscience and sense to keep Francis within it.

Francis would teach her "letters" (especially the letter "h"); and in return she would keep Francis within the limits of the law, and, probably, secure him a "respectable" career.

The creditors were therefore, by his advice, satisfied. Mr. and Mrs. Francis were established in suitable rooms, with an allowance of which she was to be the chief steward. And Francis had every prospect, Piers thought, of becoming in her hands an altered man.

One earnest remonstrance Piers could not refrain from making, against the sacrilege of taking orders except from the loftiest motives. In this my father earnestly supported him. But Mrs. Danescombe and Mrs. Dionysia were by no means of the same opinion. They were persuaded that there could be no more respectable profession than the clerical, and therefore no profession more likely to lead to respectability. The character was sure to be insensibly influenced by the position.

And as to Francis, he was persuaded that his motives were as lofty as could be required, his talents exactly suited to the office, and he himself quite a changed character.

I was thrown back on my old theory of Francis being a mere mask, a larva, with the creature inside lacking. But a kind of external conversion or transformation, such as is possible to an external creature, he did seem to have undergone. The whole outer shape of his life was altered.

In Mrs. Francis' keeping, he became prudent, punctual, orderly, respectable, to the utmost point, gave his family no trouble, gave Mrs. Danescombe much satisfaction, was, people said, a credit to the family, to Mr. Rabbidge, to Abbot's Weir. And what more could be wished, in that ancient, conventional world of my stepmother's?

Piers's second labor was of a more congenial kind. He could not at all comprehend how we had all taken it as a matter of course that Captain Godetroy must remain a prisoner while Amice

went alone on her mission to her slaves. Exchanges had been effected, and could be effected. The Clapham influence, the Beckford-Glanvil borough influence—every influence must be used to set Captain Godefroy free.

With his own marriage in near prospect, his matrimonial sympathies were very strong. He went to London and waited on the officials, stirred up the influences which influence officials, touched the warm heart of the Countess of Abbot's Weir, and even moved the calm judgment of her lord, to discover what might be done; and finally had the joy of bringing back Amice in triumph to our own dear old house; (Court being at the time in process of transformation for the reception of Mrs. Beckford-Glanvil)—with the promise of glorifying Abbot's Weir by a triple wedding.

For our wedding was indeed to be triple. Our cousin Dick Fyford had at last found the helpmeet whom he had no doubt Providence had designed for him from the beginning. Patience, the eldest of Mr. Rabbidge's fourteen, had entirely captivated him in his captivity. A little older than himself (as had been usual with his early attachments), and, since the death of her mother, enriched by all the experience of serving and nursing involved in the care of thirteen brothers and sisters, she had been frequently called in by Uncle Fyford to give counsel and aid in tending Dick's wounds. On our cousin's impressible heart the natural result had ensued. Patience was more than

usually lovable and wise, with a sweet voice, graceful movements, and a kind, bright face. His tenderness was won by the sweetness of what she was to him; while all the chivalrous protective manliness in him was roused by the thought of what he might be to her. It was, as he said, (and I believe, truly), after all, his first love. Uncle Fyford demurred a little at first, for various social and prudential considerations.

But many things concurred to soften him. A large portion of Mr. Rabbidge's congregation having waked up to the imperfections of his doctrine, had abandoned him for a new chapel and an orthodox minister; whereupon Mr. Rabbidge had abandoned the remainder to a successor more capable of sustaining a drooping cause, and had glided, with his fourteen children, into a pew in the parish church.

My uncle Fyford felt the compliment, and acknowledged the step as the removal of a social barrier. Mr. Rabbidge's family was of respectable "*bourgeois*" origin, on the lower ranges of the professions, legal and medical. And then the whole thing was so conservative; which was certainly a recommendation. It was only for Patience to remove from the abbey gatehouse to the vicarage. She would not have any unreasonable expectations. She would not revolutionize his household, or even his cases of Coleoptera. It would be so little trouble, and would make so little difference, and he was so used to her quiet ways,

and her quiet soft voice, that, on the whole, he easily glided into feeling it the most natural sequence. In short, he soon began to be of Dick's opinion that "Providence" must have designed it from the beginning. And so Dick, at Patience's request, was to be changed into Richard; and we were to have a triple wedding.

How different the course of true love had been in each case; and yet in each, in its measure true!

With Dick, secure anchorage of a home, sheltered and safe in England, to which his heart might turn and rest, however he might be tossed and knocked about, for the old country, by storms or broadsides abroad.

To Piers and Claire the quiet ripening and fulfilling of the long love of earliest years.

With Amice the raising and glorifying of every faculty and capacity of her rich nature to its highest power. The discovery of a new world, the creation of a new life, almost of a new self. I had long since come to rejoice for her, and in her, with my whole heart and soul. Who could help it, loving her half as well as I did, seeing now she grew to be all her dear, noble self, in the sunshine of that great ennobling love; how the new light and life penetrated to every inmost depth, and every uttermost blossom of her being?

So the triple wedding came to pass.

In those days, Abbot's Weir had not blossomed into æsthetics, social or ecclesiastical. Bridal veils and orange-flowers had not penetrated to our re-

mote regions. Bridesmaids were in this instance a difficulty; I being the only one of our immediate circle left unmarried. However, fortunately, the requirements of the age were not so severe as to the multiplicity of assistants then as now. I did duty for Claire and Amice, and two of Patience's sisters for herself; and Uncle Fyford married the three couples quite securely without assistance.

But we thought it all very complete and festive. The sweetness and beauty of the brides made festival enough for us, as we sat at breakfast on the vicarage lawn; the queenly majesty of Amice's movements, and the southern splendor of her radiant face contrasting with the grace and graciousness of our Claire, and the sweet English freshness of Patience.

And the landscape was fair enough to set our jewels. The sunny vicarage lawn, the old-fashioned garden, the picturesque ruins of the Abbey, around and beyond; for a background, the river sweeping along the meadows beneath the wooded hills, and the grey, old, familiar Tors; and for human surroundings, the children of the Sunday-school at the feast Amice had provided them in the old Abbey still-house, where we had taught them together for so many years, Reuben and Chloe being master and mistress of the ceremonies.

It was certainly not a wedding without tears. To me, if I dared to think of it (which I did not), this beginning was an ending of so much!

Different as the course and the character of the love which united them to each other, was the course of the life before them.

To Cousin Dick and Patience, as Uncle Fyford had said, in outward scene and circumstance little change.

But to Amice and Claire how much!

Piers and Claire were to live, at first at least, in the old Manor Farm, belonging to my father's family; one of the many small manor houses then existing in our neighborhood. In its earliest stage, centuries ago, it had doubtless been a stately dwelling compared with the rough cottages of the laborers round it. And to this day an air of good birth and breeding lingered around it. There was a paved court in front, entered by an arched gateway; and a sunny terrace at the side, sloping to one of the countless musical brooks which run among our hills, with beehives on it, and borders of thyme and sweet marjoram and roses and pansies. And within were a hall, with a long mullioned window, and a wainscotted parlor with armorial bearings carved over the large fireplace, and a broad oak staircase with bannisters adorned with carvings of nondescript heraldic creatures, beaked and clawed. And all around its steep roofs and fine old clustered chimneys, a sheltering phalanx of fine old trees, which threw deep shadows athwart the courts and gables and sunny slopes, and made morning and evening musical with the cawings of a pre-histor-

ical tribe of rooks, which no doubt looked down a little in a kindly and protective way on us Danescombes as "quite a new family."

A pleasant place it was for Claire to make fair with flowers and fresh draperies, and above all with her own fresh grace; to watch her husband ride from in the morning over the green meadows, and to welcome him to in the evening, with some new discovery or invention of home-delight.

And so life began for Claire and Piers as a delicious pastoral, sunny and pure and calm, shedding the light of its own lustre unconsciously around; while Amice and Hervé Godefroy were bent on pilgrimage, literally and mystically, over unknown seas to unfamiliar shores, through untried difficulties to duties as yet dimly perceived. Around them no scenery of sunny pastoral, but storm and battle and peril, to test and develop all that was deepest and highest in them both. No fair golden setting of circumstance around their love. They had only the love itself, the precious stone itself, with all its depth of light and mystic meaning; *only each other*, as a shield for each other against the world, as a shield together for the sufferers of the world.

Yet certainly they did not feel their lot the poorest.

Nor did I.



CHAPTER XXXVI.

LOVEDAY and I were thus, in a sense, left alone, of all the happy circle of my childhood.

Loveday had always seemed as young as any of us; and now I felt certainly as old as she was, not at all regretfully or gloomily, but as if set in a little skiff which had reached a calm creek; in a sense, outside the current of life, yet not by any means stranded or anchored, but ready at any moment, at any call, to be in the mid-current to succor any one there. Loveday's skiff had been a life-boat to many. Better I could not wish for mine.

And yet, and yet—there was a silence in the familiar old terraced garden, on the Leas and by the Leat, and in the empty rooms of the dear up-and-down old house. What was the use of listening to the silence, or of filling it with tears?—of being left behind, or of looking only backwards?

As Amice had said years before, when Piers went first to Mr. Rabbidge's school, "*Then don't be left behind.*"

I would not. Loveday never had been. We would press forward, Loveday and I, together. By the way, we should find not a few "hands that hang down" to lift up. Mine should not be hands that hang down, but hands that lift the burdens of others up. So help me God.

After all, there was double work to do in many ways; and if double work with half-power is depressing to look at, it is inspiring to do. The half-power grows to double power, by trying, when the work is given us; and the breath cannot be spent in sighing when all is wanted for the race.

Our cousin Dick had to leave home soon after his marriage; and he commended Patience especially to my cousinly and "grandmotherly" care, which she needed, having had her strength overstrained too early by the struggle to make poverty press as lightly as possible on her father and the fourteen, who continued to appeal to her as of old.

And one great gain came to me out of the many gains to others which were in an external sense at first loss to me. My father and I became closer companions than ever. Piers was with him by day, but the mornings and evenings were mine; often entirely mine, Mrs. Danescombe being not seldom absent on visits to Francis and his wife. Together we walked through the woods and meadows, or rode among the breezy moors and Tors. And together we roamed over our marvellous English literature, past and present, rest-

ing in its sunny pastures, and scaling its far-seeing heights; resting ourselves with his beloved Cowper, in his *Winter Walks* by the Ouse, or in his *Winter Evenings* by the Fireside; or led by Shakespeare through the length, and breadth, and heights and depths of human character and human life. Occasionally also new voices came to us, comparatively feeble then, and not at their full force,—yet (my father thought) not without something of the old fire and *timbre* in them,—in the early poems of Wordsworth and Coleridge. Our father never made a barrier of the past to block out his vision into the present. And so one of the best of all friendships grew up for me—the friendship between a father and a daughter; preserving youth for the child, restoring youth to the parent; enriching the young with the wealth of the recollected past, inspiring the aged with the life of the future which is to expand it; and hallowing all,—the friendship, the memories, the hopes,—with the tenderness of sacred instinctive affection. Often I felt that all my loss elsewhere was made up to me by the gain here. Often I thanked God that I had learned to estimate this treasure before it was too late.

In politics it was not a cheerful time.

It seemed to my father a long descent from the rule of Pitt, of the one man of genius, to the ministry of "All the Talents" which succeeded him. Nor did he share Charles Fox's sanguine hopes of peace with the Emperor Napoleon. He could

never comprehend how any one could trust the man whose bulletins were one series of rhetorical lies, who had crushed all true liberty in France, betrayed Venice, and trampled on Switzerland; who had caused the guiltless Duke d'Enghien to be assassinated at midnight in the ditch at Vincennes, and the noble German bookseller Palm, in open day, near Nuremberg for refusing to give up the name of the author of a patriotic pamphlet; who hated England with the hatred of an imperious will baffled, and a successful conspirator unmasked, hated her as he hated freedom, and patriotism, and genius, and goodness; as he hated Madame de Stael, Queen Louisa of Prussia, and the noblest of the Republican soldiers; as he hated all that were too great or too true to fall at his feet and worship him, with a hatred which hesitated at no weapons, from the slander of a womanish spite, to midnight assassination, or the slaughter of thousands.

For England to make peace with such an enemy, seemed to my father, to betray weaker nations, and her own noblest reason of existence; to sacrifice the reality of patriotism to the theories of liberalism. It was one of the cases, he thought, not unfrequent, in which heart and genius saw alike,—the heart of the nation and the genius of her greatest—and saw truer than prudence and talent,—the prudence of the subtlest policy, and the ability of "All the Talents."

Grievous it was therefore to him to hear of

negotiations going on with M. Talleyrand through all the summer of 1806, from spring till autumn, while Napoleon was using the time in bringing nation after nation into submission; "submission," which, as Lord Howick said, "never stopped his progress."

His only consolation was to turn to the other of the two objects which it was said Charles Fox had set his heart on carrying—to the long parliamentary warfare against the slave-trade opened by the first Quaker petition in 1783.

On June 10, 1806, Charles Fox himself, as Prime Minister, moved—"That this House, considering the slave-trade to be contrary to the principles of justice, humanity, and policy, will with all practicable expedition take effectual measures for its abolition." "His own life was precarious," he said, "if he omitted this opportunity of saving the injured Africans he might have no other opportunity; and under the circumstances he dared not neglect so great a duty." "If he should succeed in carrying through this measure," he declared, "he should consider his life well spent, and should retire satisfied that he had not lived in vain."

Too soon was the precariousness of the life, and the sacredness of that opportunity proved. It was indeed his last. That eloquent voice was no more to be heard in Parliament. His health failed almost immediately after that motion was carried by a majority of 114 to 15 in the Commons, and by 41 to 20 in the House of Lords.

Within three months, Charles Fox was laid close beside William Pitt, in the north transept of Westminster Abbey.

"The giants are dead," it was said; "we who have seen them know. We have come to the lesser race."

Another of her great sons had been sacrificed to his work for England. The negotiations for peace with France, from which Charles Fox had hoped so much, had failed. Care and failure had told heavily on his already weakened frame. But "even when removed by pain and sickness from the discussion of political subjects," Mr. Clarkson wrote, "he never forgot the anti-slavery cause. 'Two things,' he said, on his deathbed, 'I wish earnestly to see accomplished—peace with Europe, and the abolition of the slave trade. *But of the two I wish the latter.*'"

The last and best was granted; and the hope of it was permitted to dawn on his dying eyes. Again and again, as disease made progress, he spoke of it. Indeed, as Lord Howick said in the House of Commons, "the very hope of the abolition quivered on his lips in his last hours."

Debates followed in both Houses, sometimes prolonged till the dawn; until at last on Wednesday, the 25th of March, 1807, Lord Granville's ministry ennobled itself, and England, by obtaining the royal assent to the abolition of the slave-trade, in the very last hour of its existence, when

his Majesty had demanded the resignation of office rather than yield Catholic emancipation.

It was decreed that no slave should be landed in the British colonies after March 1st, 1808.

That was a day of pure and exalted triumph at Clapham. Whatever jealousies there might subsequently be among the narrators of the fight, to those who fought it, success was incomparably dearer than fame, and the success of May 22 was the glory of each, and the joy of all.

Twenty years before, in 1787, the first meeting of the Society for the Abolition of the Slave Trade had been held, by twelve men, mostly merchants, all but two Quakers: at their head Granville Sharpe, who had struck the first blow in rescuing Jonathan Strong twenty years earlier yet, in 1767;—among them Thomas Clarkson, who of all the advocates approached the nearest to the martyr's crown, having again and again risked his life in hunting out, through riotous taverns, and on stormy seas, the evidence which convinced the nation and the Parliament.

For forty years they had carried the contest on;—their first victory the decision wrung from Lord Mansfield, that no slavery was possible on English soil.

During those forty years, the monarchy of France had perished; the French Republic had fallen before the Empire; all Europe, all freedom and national life were falling before Bonaparte

and the terrible instrument of destruction he had created out of prostrate France.

Three times invasion had threatened our shores. Our navy had saved us, but had lost its greatest commander. Two of our greatest ministers had died, worn out with the combat with Bonaparte.

But steadily, undistracted by perils they felt as keenly as any, or by the ruins of fallen dynasties and falling nations, and undismayed by defeat and calumny, Wilberforce and Clarkson, and those who worked with them, had pursued their great purpose of rescuing a race.

And at last the midday sun of Wednesday, March 25, 1807, shone on their victory.

Clapham went to the ends of the earth for metaphors magnificent enough to express the joy. My cousins wrote me that Mr. Wilberforce had been compared to "Manco Capac, the child of the sun, descended on earth in pity to human suffering."

A medal was struck, with the head of Mr. Wilberforce the "Friend of Africa" on one side, and on the reverse, a number of Pagan allegorical personages, with wreaths, Æsculapian serpents, and shields, one of these personages being crowned by a winged being from a cloud, carrying a cross; encircled by the motto which, breaking through the cold haze of allegory, goes straight and warm to the heart—"I have heard their cry." And better than all, through the shouts of victory were

heard the threatening murmurs of a war which was to lead to greater victory yet.

Lord Percy spoke of the abolition, not only of the slave trade, but of *slavery*; and Sheridan dared to say in the House that the abolition of the slave trade was but a prelude to the emancipation of the slaves.

The planters, and all those interested in maintaining slavery, (like the Dames at Abbot's Weir—and like the Pharisees), had indeed seen, from the first, whither the conflict was tending, better than many of those who began it.

It was a daily delight to carry every detail of the debates to Loveday, as she lay, now no longer on the little couch, but on her bed, placed as near the window as might be, that she might see the birds which came to the window-sill for crumbs, and the children playing in the empty marketplace. Sometimes I thought her very peace and joy must keep her alive.

"Wish it, *only wish it enough*, Loveday!" I said to her one day, "and you will live to the next victory as you have lived to this."

On the morning when I told her the king's consent had been given, she yielded to a passionate emotion rare indeed for her. She wept and sobbed for joy. And then she broke into ritual observance.

"Bride," she said, "I cannot stay in bed to-day; I must dress, and, dear, you will place the couch in the front window in the dear old school-

room ; and Piers and Mr. Danescombe will come and lift me to it. And I shall see the children all together again."

She meant not so much again, as "once more," only once more. But she would not pain me by saying so.

Miss Felicity considered it a craze, but she made no resistance.

And that afternoon Claire and I had our Loveday once more on the little couch where she had taught me my "heroes," to say to Miss Felicity, on the first day that Claire kissed me with the fool's cap on.

In the close white cap and the soft grey unrustling dress, and all her cloud of white and dove-color, with a faint rosy flush on her pale face, like a cloud at earliest dawn.

There she lay like a crowned queen, while all the children came to her one by one, and from a little basket by her side she gave each some little token ; for the girls, pincushions and needlecases, and knitted mittens and housewife, made out of bits of the old dove-colored dresses ; and for the boys, knives and little seals and pencils, which she must have ransacked her scanty childish stores to furnish ; for, money she always considered she had none that was not due to her father and Miss Felicity.

She had some kind little saying for every one, and she begged them all to keep the things as keepsakes for her, and as tokens that the *poor Af-*

rican mothers and fathers and little children were not to be stolen from their homes again any more, forever. And then she kissed them all.

The children were pleased, but very subdued. I think they looked on it as some religious festival, which indeed it was, and felt the kiss something sacramental.

And then, when the gifts were given, she said, not in entreaty, but with a gentle easy authority, as of one accustomed to command,—

“Aunt Felicity, I want them all to have a holiday this afternoon, that they may remember the day.”

And Miss Felicity made no difficulty or demur, strict as her regulations about holidays were; none having ever been granted by her before within the memory of Abbot's Weir, for causes less historical than the Day of the martyrdom of the blessed King Charles I.—to the confusion of the Jacobins,—or the day of the “happy deliverance of King James I. and the Three Estates of England, from the most treacherous and bloody-intended massacre by gunpowder”—to the confusion of the Papists.

Every one felt that this was Loveday's *fête*; like a birthday, a wedding, or a coronation.

And so the children went away; but their subdued demeanor, which usually ended with the supposed range of Miss Felicity's inspection, lasted further that day.

The little ones went quietly all the way to their

homes, to the surprise of their parents; as if it had been Sunday.

And we, Piers and Claire and my father and I, spent the afternoon with her also, as if it had been Sunday; one of George Herbert's Sundays.

"Day most calm, most bright,
The fruit of this; the next world's bud,
The indorsement of supreme delight;

a day on which

"Heaven's gate stands ope,"

as indeed it seemed to stand to us that day, seeing the light shine through it on Loveday's radiant face and feeling her so near the entering in.

It was indeed her last day among us all. It seemed like a receiving the Viatican together.

And after that, I felt the journey had to be taken, and we must let her go.

Something about the day having been like Sunday I said to her when we had lifted her to her bedroom again, and I was leaving her for the night.

"Like Sunday? Yes," she said, "but not a Sabbath; not a close. Not a seventh day, but a first day of the week. A beginning. The victory which made it a festival is only the first victory of the campaign. The warfare has to go on, and you will all help to carry it on. And *we* also," she said with a solemn joy, "if we are with Him who is conquering and to conquer,—nearer Him

than we can be here—we, I think, surely may help, not less.”

She said few of what are usually called last words. Her words had all been spoken on the shores of the eternal sea, whose murmurs make last words so sacred, in the Presence which makes that sea but as the Sea of Galilee on that calm morning when the risen Master waited there to welcome the disciple to the shore.

She never spoke of closing and ending, or repose, or death; but of continuance, and beginning, and service, and life.

“Going to rest?” she said. “Yes! such rest as is possible to love; the rest of Michael the Archangel, the rest of Him who was ‘persecuted’ in His Stephen, and whose strength was made perfect in the weakness in His Paul. ‘Sleep;’ yes, the sleep of those who ‘rest not day nor night.’ All that need sleep to be left behind in ‘the sleeping place.’ And *we*, for *us*, waking, serving, *seeing*, with eyes that can bear to see ‘face to face.’”

“I hope I have been learning a little,” she said. “And now I shall begin to use what I have learned. Not, indeed, ‘ten talents’ or ‘ten cities,’ Bride; but perhaps some little village, some little corner of the worlds, to help.”

“Why not *this* corner?” I said; “dear Love-day. Why not *us*?”

“I should like it best of all,” she said, with her child-like smile. “And we shall be near

enough to ask Him. And He knows and cares without our asking. But He will do the very best, here and there, for us all. Here, if we will let Him choose; and *there* we shall delight for Him to choose."

One morning, when I came, she was holding in her feeble hands a letter from Amice. She gave it to me to read, and watched me earnestly as I glanced through it.

And as long as her cough gave her an intermission she entered into every detail of Amice's letter, which was very bright, though not remarkably sanguine.

"I write to thee first, our Loveday," Amice wrote, "because I am in thy country, among thy people. Dear, they are not as delightful as thyself. They are not exactly the aristocracy of the races. I am afraid they have not yet reached a region where they can be ruled without rewards and punishments. And I am afraid the reward most of them like best is repose in the crudest sense of doing nothing. A Paradise of lying still in the sunshine, and occasional singing and dancing, with a good deal of sugar, sensuous and spiritual, would satisfy them.

"In tastes, intellectual and physical, we cannot imagine how to meet them. The things we like would be a burden to them. The things they like would certainly not be delights to us.

"But then there is the heart; that in us all

which *loves*; that is, our inmost selves. And this, of course, we cannot pounce on in a moment.

“Poor dear, blundering, imitative children; children with the passions of middle age, and the cunning of hunted old age.

“On one of the estates they wished to get up a Sunday service in emulation of the white men, and for their Liturgy, recited in solemn measured accents, with responses, ‘*This is the house that Jack built.*’

“Sometimes I am afraid the sacred words in our real worship may, in their ignorance, be to some of them little better.

“Indeed, for that matter, we are nearer such absurdities than we think, all of us, when we make our devotions in any degree a repetition of charms, instead of a communion of heart or a lifting up of the soul. It is so difficult to know when they *understand*, and when they only catch the words and tones, and *copy*, like clever, timid children.

“Yet, here again, there is the *heart* in common. That they can love, and sacrifice all for love, is true. ‘They may shoot me dead, or do with me what they please,’ one of them said, ‘if they only do no harm to our teachers.’

“And some of them, I am sure, have learned from the Moravians, of a pitying, loving, suffering dying Saviour, to please whom they will be patient and honest (and which seems to me a miracle of grace), will work industriously for masters who

have no more right to their service than a thief to a stolen purse.

“Also, we are beginning to discriminate, to see differences among them in character and in race and training. We have a few men of quite higher races; one Mohammedan, who can read Arabic.

“But the grand difficulty is the slavery itself; soften it as one can.

“Often Burke’s words occur to me, ‘*Nothing makes a happy slave but a degraded man.*’ I feel the wrong and injustice press on us so heavily, now that we are close to it, that sometime we think (tell Bride and Piers) there is no real remedy but the one Piers propounded at Miss Felicity’s years ago, when I told him, for his pains, he was a very little boy and knew nothing of what he was talking about; namely, to set them free at once.

“To train people to be men by keeping them children, to train people to be free except by making them free, by letting them bear the consequences of their sins and mistakes, seems to me more and more an impossibility.

“What does the whole history of the world mean but that it *is* an impossibility, *even to God*?

“We have found that Mr. David Barclay, one of your community, as no doubt you know, did emancipate thirty slaves in Jamaica about ten years since; but he could not do it in the island. He had to transport them to Philadelphia, and there apprentice them to trades. It answered in

almost all cases; but the coldness of the climate of Pennsylvania was a difficulty.

“Meantime Christianity can raise and does raise some even of these slaves. ‘If the Son makes any one free, he is free indeed.’

“Only it seems to me more difficult for owners to do missionary work than for others; especially for owners who feel slavery a great wrong.

“I want to be down among them poor and toiling and suffering; and we cannot.

“We can’t; oh, Loveday. How can I? when God has made me rich with every kind of riches, and above all, with such unutterable treasures of love and joy?”

“How good of God,” Loveday murmured, as I laid the letter down beside her, “to let me know even that! And yet how foolish!” she added. “As if we should be blind and deaf and forgetful *there*. Blind in His light! Deaf with His voice, forgetful in His Presence, who careth for the sparrows, to whom one of us is ‘more than many sparrows.’ Oh, Bride, how I love those words! There seems to me a smile in them, like a mother with playful tenderness reassuring a weeping frightened child.”

And then came an interval of breathlessness and pain; and she could say no more.

“Amice has crossed her sea, and begun her new life before I have,” she said, when it was over.

“But oh, Loveday,” I said, “no letters, no message, no sound across that sea!”

"Not from that side," she said. Only one Voice audible to mortal ears. *Go and tell my brethren that I am risen and go before them,*' was from that side. And it is enough. But messages from *this side*, who knows how constantly? And we are to be with Him whom those messages reach, with Him to whom here we pray."

"No," I said; "the blindness, dimness, deafness, can be only here! But oh, Loveday, say—promise, prophecy—that you will not forget or change!"

"Did you make Amice promise?" she said, stroking my face as I bent over her. "Life changes us more than death; more than living with Him who changes not. With Him we shall be more ourselves, not less. *All* ourselves, our true selves, perfected; knowing more, hoping more, loving more. My dear, love in heaven must be deeper than love on earth. No love in idleness, no mere delicious leisures its chief rewards; but caring, giving, helping, serving, *giving itself. Loving more than here!* My darling," she concluded, "who hast been so true to me, so much to me so long, it seems difficult to think so. Yet it must be true. With Him who loves best. Loving even more than now. Although it seems difficult to think so. *Loving more.*"

And after that I know not that she said much.

It came to nursing night and day. Many of those she had taught entreated to be allowed to help. Her sick bed was supplied with the best

dainties the little town could give, from little shops, and from the gardens of the poor, sent with apologies in the most delicate way, as to a princess. And every morning Claire brought the sweetest flowers. Not one service was rendered her that was not a service of love.

And when all the pain was over for her, forever, a rare gleam of intelligence and tenderness came over her poor father, as he looked on her face for the last time, pale and lifeless and full of deep rest, with lilies and white roses around her, Claire's last offering. Old memories seemed to wake up within him.

"My poor child! Good little Loveday! She was like her poor mother. I did not do all I might for either of them. God forgive me." Then turning to Miss Felicity and recurring to the habitual shield of "adverse circumstances" which she threw around him, he concluded, "But everything went against me."

But Miss Felicity, as she led him away, for once forgot the shield, and did not try to comfort or excuse him. She knew too well how sure the stream is to sweep down those who do not pull against it.

She only said, "*God can forgive us!* He has more than made up to her. He can make us a little like her,—a little, before we die."

The beauty of the patient life had burst on her at last, now it was finished. It had then, after all,

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of God.

But to me all through those sad days, and
from her grave, beside that of my own mother, her
words kept echoing back, as if from heaven,—

" *With Him who loves most, Loving more even
than she loved here below. Although it seems
difficult to think so. Loving more.*"





CHAPTER XXXVII.

THE years were come during which England had to pull absolutely alone against the stream; the whole continent swept away by the torrent of Bonaparte's victories; the oldest dynasties following with such acquiescence as they could assume, in the wake of his triumph; the nations dragged helplessly on, not yet aroused. And England herself without any leader, on the throne, in the Council, in Parliament, by sea or by land, to whom she gave her whole trust; Nelson, Pitt, and Fox all laid low in her defence.

Yet the spirit of the nation was high and unwavering. The conscience of men had been freed from the sense of a great national wrong. The least symptom of success to our army was welcomed by many, after the abolition of the slave-trade, as a sign of Divine approval; while failure, as at Buenos Ayres, was resented as the result merely of the incapacity of the leader, and did but increase the sturdy determination of the people not to give in.

Meantime Europe seemed falling deeper and

deeper. On the 14th of October, 1806, Prussia touched her depth of humiliation at Jena. In November Bonaparte had entered Berlin in triumph. Happily for Prussia and for her kings, at the last, they fought, and fell with the nation, and were honorably identified with her sufferings. While dismembering the kingdom, Bonaparte circulated calumnies against the noble Queen, and stooped to call the king "General Brunswick." Prussia and her royal race were in the dust together; and from the dust together they arose.

But as yet not a promise nor a stir of rising life was visible.

From Berlin Napoleon had issued, in November, 1806, the famous "Decrees," making all English commerce contraband.

In April, 1807, after his victory of Friedland, Napoleon met the Czar Alexander in the richly canopied tent on the raft on the river Niemen, and concluded the Treaty of Tilsit.

North and south, east and west, on all the dreary horizon, not a power seemed to lift its head in opposition, over the fields swept level by triumphant armies; kings were acquiescent, and nations prostrate. Sweden, our one ally at that moment, under the young king so soon to be dethroned, seemed scarcely a Power, and scarcely within the European horizon. Bonaparte's brothers were on the thrones of Naples, Holland and Westphalia, and one was soon to be on the throne of Spain;

while his generals were transferred to those of Naples and of Sweden.

Yet, hopeless as everything looked, national life was not extinct.

It is good now to recall the thrill of delight with which the first symptom of the rekindling life was welcomed throughout England.

England had seemed the only living nation left in the world, the only people that at the touch of the French armies and the word of the Conqueror would not crumble into atoms. Was there such a thing, some might question, as national life at all? Was not human society after all a mere nebula of disconnected atoms, in perpetual oscillation, and perfectly indifferent around what centre they were grouped, as one attraction or another proved the stronger; the isolation of England being simply mechanical and geographical, an affair of a few miles of separating sea? Was not the "nation," after all, a Platonic dream, as obsolete as any other of the "Universal Ideas," or any other exploded theory of old scholasticism? the only reality being individual existence, and self-interest.

The answer came from the most unexpected side; from Spain, asleep for centuries under her imbecile kings.

Bonaparte did but attempt with her what elsewhere had been submitted to patiently enough. The game seemed safer than usual. There was a division in the royal house. One puppet was intriguing against another. What could be easier

than to entrap both, betray both, and set a Bonaparte on the vacant throne?

But then suddenly the great chess-player discovered that the pieces had life; kings, queens, bishops, knights, pawns; pawns most evidently of all, and most unaccountably of all; were not *puppets*, but *men* fathers and sons, families, a *nation*.

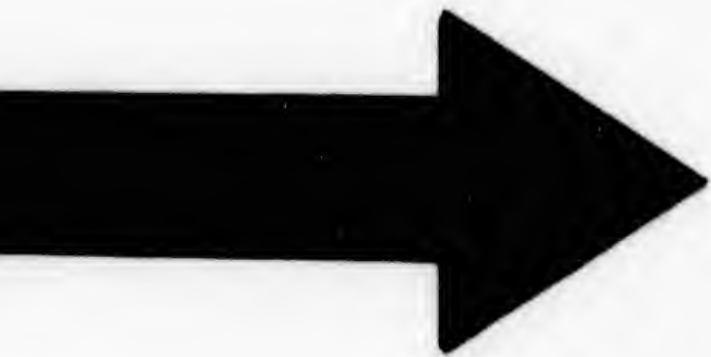
From end to end Spain awoke; awoke, arose, lived, palpitated in every limb with life. Simultaneously, not at the summons of any one great Leader, but spontaneously, without preparation, city after city, province after province, rose, felt they were not many but one; and as one man, refused to be at the bidding of the man before whom all Europe had bowed down.

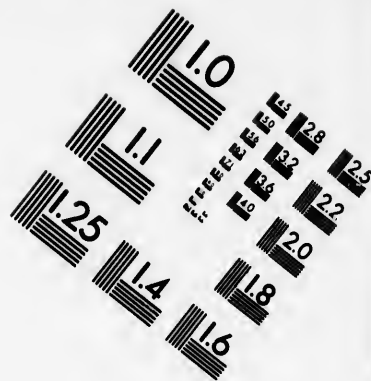
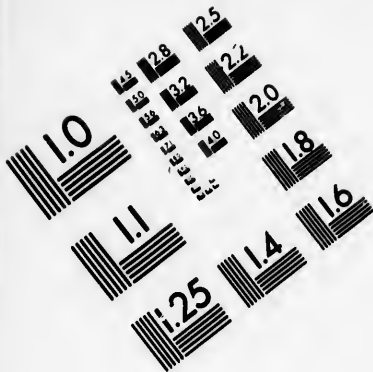
The enthusiasm of sympathy throughout England was universal.

All our England (the England some call prosaic, with an exceptional Alfred, Shakspeare, Milton, Cromwell, Nelson, or William Pitt) ran wild with welcome to the "patriots of Spain."

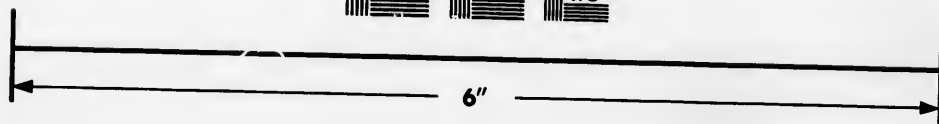
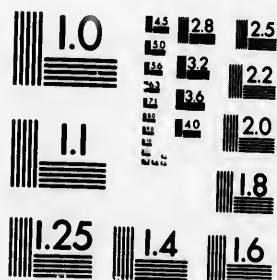
Sonorous Spanish names rang like our own great patriotic household names through every sober little country town in the land. The Maid of Saragossa became as much a heroine among us as Joan of Arc ought to have been in France. England demanded to spend her treasure and her blood in helping this new-born people to freedom. The name of freedom had its old magic still among us, and knit the countrymen of Drake in brotherly







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bonds to the old enemies of the Armada. Mr. Wilberforce said in the House of Commons, "that every Briton joined in prayer to the Great Ruler of events to bless with their merited success the struggles of a gallant people, in behalf of everything dear to the Christian, the citizen, and the man."

We who know what came after that first trumpet-call of patriotism and liberty, the struggles with the incapacity and selfishness of "patriotic Juntas," which all but baffled Wellington, and all the chaos that has followed, may find it difficult to recall the deep and generous response that Spanish appeal awoke.

But into whatever feeble and discordant echoes the music fell, it was, nevertheless, in its beginning, a true trumpet-call, clear and strong, giving forth no uncertain sound. It awoke the nations from a sleep of despair into which they never fell again, to prepare themselves for the battle. And for any nation to have rendered that service to Europe is a possibility and a fact never to be forgotten.

It was in May, 1808, that this voice of patriotic resistance reached us from Spain.

On the 12th of July, Arthur Wellesley sailed from Cork for Corunna.

In August he defeated the French at Vimiero; and the Peninsular War, and the fall of Bonaparte had begun.

Bonaparte had touched the sacred realities of human life; and henceforth his warfare was no

longer merely with dynasties, but with nations, and with men.

During those years my father woke to new hopes for the world.

He had always looked on Bonaparte as the most unmitigated embodiment of the principle of selfishness which is the root of human evil that the world, or at least Christendom, had seen; the devil's ideal of humanity, "Ye shall be as gods," opposed to the divine, "I come to do Thy will."

And selfishness, evil, could not, he thought, create, or even organize. Being a negation of light, and heat, and life, it can only detach, divide, disorganize, deny, destroy. The nearest approach it makes to positive organization is in freezing, crystallizing living waters into ice. But the unity thus created is only apparent; ice-seas, ice-bbergs, ice-blocks, with no power in them save that of mass and momentum; power which the petal of a flower at the touch of the sun can vanquish.

Into such ice-blocks Bonaparte had been freezing the nations; with such an ice-torrent he had been laying them waste, through his Grand Army. And now at the awaking of life within the nations, the whole frozen fabric was crashing down, or melting away.

He had been able to create nothing. It incensed him that men of genius did not rise at his call. He was ready to lavish rewards and decorations on them. But in the icy atmosphere he had spread, no literature could grow. Even the code

called by his name was truly, my father said, but a modification of the work of the Republic; the literature that did flourish was but the feeble harvest of earlier sowing. The conglomerations of people he had forced together into "kingdoms," did not recognize themselves as corporate bodies; and when the icy hand was withdrawn, they simply flowed without effort back into the old channels. The one thing which had seemed most like a creation, the Grand Army which moved at his bidding, and was inspired by his will, which had enlarged and compacted year by year, and had crushed and desolated Europe, was indeed no organization of life to Europe or to France, but only a terrible engine of death, soon to recoil on itself.

And from the first moment when the nations awoke, that engine of destruction, dread and terrible and strong exceedingly, was doomed.

Many vicissitudes indeed there were. The pathetic elegy—

"Not a drum was heard, nor a funeral note,"

rang like muffled bells throughout England when Sir John Moore fell at Corunna.

Deep was the indignation among us when Andrew Hofer was betrayed and shot in the Tyrol; and true was the grief to many of us when the young Schill fell in battle, saving Bonaparte from the dishonor of executing another patriot as if he had been a rebel.

Many were the reasonable grumblings and

murmurings among us when the Government lavished money in sending thousands of Englishmen to die of marsh-fever at Walcheren, and withheld supplies from Sir Arthur Wellesley. Many also were the unreasonable grumbings when Sir Arthur Wellesley, after the victory of Talavera, retired within the lines of Torres Vedras, refusing to risk England and Europe by hurrying before popular outcry, as he refused to risk her for any niggardliness of cabinets, or cabals of fanatics.

Those two years between Talavera and Ciudad Rodrigo sorely tried the patience and faith of the nation. For while they were slowly passing, Bonaparte had imposed on Sweden one of his generals as king, while Austria had given the Corsican an Archduchess in marriage, and an heir had been born to perpetuate the new dynasty; and a deplorable war had broken out with America, to my father the darkest and most unnatural of conflicts.

Yet there was a feeling of hope through the nation, the indescribable sense of vitality and growth which distinguishes the dullest spring day from the finest day in autumn.

One hero was among us again, who never lost hope.

Sir Arthur Wellesley, behind the lines of Torres Vedras, persisted that Bonaparte's empire was undermined: and that England had only to hold her own, and keep hope alive in the peninsula a little longer, and the crash would come.

Meantime, in our silence and isolation at home, there was anything but silence or lifelessness.

In 1811 the first steanboat was launched on the Clyde. The great Steam Power had made another conquest.

In the same year the anti-slavery cause gained another victory by the passing of Lord Brougham's Bill, constituting slave-trading Felony.

And throughout the land sounded a chorus of new poetic voices. Bonaparte could create no literature in France. But Freedom, and the conflict with the oppressor, awoke a fresh burst of poetry and art in England.

Once more, as in the days of Luther, English thought drank from the old kindred Teutonic sources (once more themselves issuing afresh into the light), giving and receiving, as is natural and due between races so one and yet so diverse.

Scott and Byron, Wordsworth, Coleridge, Southey, Keats, Shelley, began to be heard among us. And Flaxman was there for the sculpture of our heroes and singers: now that we had again heroes and poets to celebrate.

It was an era of new life; although the powers of death and darkness, storm and whirlwind, were still mighty in the world. As of old, in all our northern spring-tides, the hammer of Thor the Thunderer wakened the earth to song.

And meanwhile, in our little world of Abbot's Weir, life and death were at work.

The feet of little children pattered about the old rooms at Danescombe Manor, and merry little voices echoed among the old trees. The garden terraces of the old house in Abbot's Weir, the Dropping Well and the Aladdin's "Subterranean Passage," became scenes of hopes and delights to a new generation.

Little cousins came to join them, also, from the Vicarage. Once more little motherless children played on the slopes, and along the Leas and Leat. For during our cousin Dick's absence with the fleet, Patience, his young wife, had died, leaving a twin boy and girl. The strain of motherly care, coming on her so early, had been too much for her tender and anxious nature, and she passed away, leaving the great blank such gentle, devoted lives must leave.

Eager, eloquent, questioning voices may soon be replaced. It is the quiet answering voices, scarcely heard except in response, in careful counsel, or in gentle decision, which leave the terrible void of silence.

She lived until the baptism of her babes. Piers and Claire and I were sponsors. I had always been drawn closely to her; and she had for me that strange strong affection which so often silently possesses natures that have little power of utterance.

Horatio, the boy, was called after his father's hero; and for the baby girl the mother would have her own name joined with mine.

"You will love the little ones, and they will love you," she said, "Bride, Cousin Bride!"

I did indeed love them. Who could have helped it, having a "grandmotherly" heart like mine? Dick was smitten to the dust by the loss of his wife's deep, quiet affection, and was only to be comforted by continual minute details about her babies.

And so it happened that their home was almost as much with us as with Uncle Fyford, to whom the babies were naturally a considerable perplexity.

Mrs. Danescombe was more patient with these little ones than she had been with us.

Indeed, she seemed more dependent and more sympathetic in many ways than of old.

The love for her Francis, which seemed first to have awakened her heart to the joy of loving, brought to her further teaching through the burdens and sorrows, and even the disappointments of love.

Mrs. Dionysia was not at all a person meekly to take the second place. And my stepmother, when she returned from her visits to Francis, seemed to me to cling increasingly to us, and to accept our attention and deference with a gratitude very different from her old way of taking everything as a matter of course.

Moreover these visits became rarer, as Francis became established as a popular preacher in a fashionable watering-place, where his exquisite man-

ners and rounded periods made a great impression; and as Mrs. Francis left her village origin farther and farther behind, while her father's death left her joint-heiress of his not inconsiderable accumulation of savings.

Mrs. Danescombe never blamed them. She had too long been used to throw a veil over Francis' failings, to hide them from others; and now it touched me to see how she tried to transfer the veil; so as to hide what she could not bear to see, from herself.

Francis' family increased; the spare room in the house diminished. The grandmother's visits became limited to an annual one, and this again had to be limited in extent. There was only one small room,—Francis' dressing-room—when his mother was not there. Of course Mrs. Danescombe was most welcome to it. But she could not but feel she was costing them a sacrifice of comfort while she stayed.

And at last, one year, instead of the annual invitation, came a long apologetic epistle from Francis. He and his wife were so distressed; but they had been obliged to make other arrangements in the house. One of the children had to sleep in the dressing-room. Francis had to content himself with a strip of a room on another floor, which really Dionysia could not think of asking his mother to occupy. They must hope for more space in a little time. Dionysia talked of investing part of her property in building a house. But for the pres-

ent with the greatest regret, they were reluctantly compelled to deny themselves their annual pleasure, etc.

Mrs. Danescombe gave me the letter to read. I felt an indignant flush rise to my cheek, and could scarcely restrain myself from warm words of blame.

But my stepmother said,—

“You see they have talked it over, and done their best to manage it for me. But they cannot. I will make haste and pack up the little presents for the children, that they may get them in time.”

We did not say another word, but I helped her to finish and pack the gifts she had been so busy preparing,—little knitted socks, warm grandmotherly articles of winter clothing, packets of manifold many-colored sweetmeats, yecept “fairing,” picture books, and some little luxuries Francis had been fond of as a child.

She took it very quietly. But the tears came many times into my eyes, as I helped her. And when the hamper was filled and carefully corded, she sat looking at it a moment, and then said,—

“It will please the little ones.”

And then, with a child-like, helpless look, and a quiet, hopeless tone I shall never forget, she said,—

“They do not want me. No one wants me.”

I tried to comfort her. I said, “We all wanted her—*I wanted her* ;” which, little as I could ever have thought it, began to be really true.

But she shook her head.

Then I went back to the subject of Francis, and spoke of the new house, and the room there would be sure to be in it for her. She tried to take up the hope.

"I am afraid I have been too much given to interfering and finding fault," she said, humbly. "Dionysia said so. I tried not to offend her. But perhaps I said too much. And she does not bear much. She naturally thinks of her own children, as I thought of my Francis. I should have remembered better. I suppose I made an idol, and am punished."

I don't know what I said then, she touched me so to the heart. I blamed myself, and made the best of Francis, and said many incoherent things. But what I felt in the depth of my heart, and ended with was,—

"Oh, don't talk of making idols. God gave you a child. And you loved him with your whole heart. He was your joy. And that did your heart good, and warmed it all through. And now your love brings you pain. And that does us good, more good than anything; the suffering of love. Idols *harden* the heart. Your love *softens* your heart. This is not idolatry. Idolatry is selfishness; worshipping anything or any one for *our own sakes*. This that makes you suffer is *love*. God is not punishing you; He is softening, teaching,—making you so dear and good! You love and suffer, and yet love on. In what better way, in what way more like Himself, can God teach?"

She did not oppose. She kissed me, and said I was kind, but that I must not think Francis meant anything unkind.

"One day, perhaps, he will love enough to suffer," I ventured to say, "and then God will teach him."

"Not suffer!" she said deprecatingly. "Please God, at all events, not *much*. It is not much he has to learn."

We did all we could to cheer her, my father and I. But the "serpent's tooth" had penetrated.

Many an hour we passed in the old oak parlor, such as I had never dreamt we could spend there together. I read and chatted to her. She did not talk much. Her range of literature was not large. Novels hurt her. It was so difficult to find any story of human life which did not grate like a saw on that sore heart. In history she had no interest; poetry she felt flimsy. To sermons and religious books, I do not think she attended much; but these were what she liked best. The good words flowed past her like the murmur of a brook; while she sewed, and knitted, and embroidered, for Francis and his children.

And then came a cold; the last blow which so easily strikes down a frame which has lost any strong vital power of resistance.

She did not very much care to live. She hoped Dionysia would one day build the new house, and they would have room for her. Yet *they*

could do without her; that was too plain: and that was the unutterable anguish.

She did not much wish to die. It was not clear what heaven could have better for her than Francis had been. And even in heaven perhaps Francis would not need her. But she hoped God would be merciful, and pity and forgive her. And so life could be lived on there or here.

I wrote to Francis at the first symptoms of serious illness, urgently. I thought it would be so terrible for him if he did not arrive in time. He wrote back very eloquent and affectionate messages. But there was to be an Archdeacon's Visitation, and he was to preach the sermon. It was an opportunity of some importance; an honor, he was sure his mother would be sorry for him to miss. I must write again immediately; and if the accounts were not better, he would come by the earliest coach.

His poor mother did quite appreciate the honor.

"Tell him on no account to lose it for me," she said. "He will come as soon as he can afterwards I know."

I wrote, in contradiction to her wish, urging him to give up the Visitation, and come at once. But there were no telegraphs and no railways in those days. My letter arrived on the eve of the Visitation. Dionysia had prepared a considerable entertainment. No one could say what might depend on such an occasion, or result from

it. He preached the sermon, and started on the next morning.

Mrs. Danescombe did not ask if Francis had come. But she asked every evening if the coach had arrived. And when she was told that it had, and no further news followed, she said nothing more; except on the last evening, and then she moaned,—

“I am weaker to-night and worse. Poor Francis, he will be very sorry.

And then, after an interval,—

“Bridget, poor little Bride, you have been kind. You have done all you could.”

And again,—

“God so loved the world that He gave His only Son. He must have loved very much. It *must* be good to go to Him.”

And again, in a feeble voice, as if to herself,—

“Poor dear Francis! He will be very sorry. But you see, he could not help it. He could not help it. Give him my dear love, and tell him I pray God to bless him, with my last breath.”

That morning the struggle was over. And we trusted she had found how good it is to be with God.

The next evening Francis came.

He was very much moved. He blamed himself, at first, bitterly.

Then the old habit returned on him. And he began to excuse himself, and to explain to us and

to himself how impossible it was he could have done otherwise.

But when all was over, and his mother was laid in the family vault beside mine, the truer feeling came back.

"No one will ever love me as she did," he said to me as we sat alone together in the oak parlor — "never again. Would to God I had come the day before."

His sermon at the Archdeacon's Visitation was a great success. It brought him the presentation to an excellent living from the patron, who was one of the audience.

But I believe it brought him a far deeper blessing than that. It had brought him, through the irrevocable loss, through the unfulfilled duty, a sense of irreparable, irremediable ill-return for so much irrecoverable love, which pierced at last through all his scales and crusts of self-complacency, and left a sting of remorse and repentance within him, wakening the real heart within him to the softening discipline of a life-long incurable pain.

There was no more only that smooth, transformed, respectable, but impenetrable larva of an "outside." There was, as Piers had always trusted, and I had so often doubted, a creature, still undeveloped and feeble, but living and to live immortally within.

There was no more only the Pharisee, prodigal or respectable, crude or transformed, thanking God

for the fewness and shadowiness of his sins, and the efficacy of his repentance, and the success of his labors in turning other people from their real sinful sins.

There was the Publican, beating on his breast, in many a secret hour of that inward, irremediable pain ; feeling great need of forgiveness, and asking it ; and hoping that the unquenchable love which he had returned so ill, which had forgiven and loved to the last, might be matched by another Love, as enduring and as forgiving ; and that he might be suffered one day, when all his popular sermons, and all his much-lauded labors were over, to follow up the life-long confession, " Father, I have sinned against Thee," by saying what he could now never say on earth, " Mother, mother, I have sinned against *thee*," and so might creep humbled and pardoned into some lowly place among the redeemed at last.



A.M.

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CHAPTER XXXVIII.

THE close of the great melodramatic career of Bonaparte was drawing near at last; a close more melodramatic than any of his bulletins. Or rather, the drama had passed into other hands; and the melodrama was deepening into true and terrible tragedy.

Wellington, and our little determined British army, were no longer crouching in expectation behind their defences. They were pressing on through Spain; and day after day the coach dashed down the quiet streets of Abbot's Weir, garlanded with laurels for victory after victory—Salamanca, Ciudad Rodrigo, Badajos; sonorous words rang as in old Roman days through the island; and lastly, the significant prophetic name "Vittoria." Vittoria! A great battle won at last on the very borders of France, with the French armies driven before us.

"Mere side scenes," some might say—mere skirmishes outside the great line of battle which, in the spring of 1812, had been terribly advancing

in the far north, and was now more terribly ebbing.

Yet it was something to have stood alone as England did against that stream, when all the rest of the world were swept away before it. It was something for Europe, which Europe should scarcely forget: it was infinitely much for England, which England is not likely to forget.

From March to December that last act of the dreadful drama went on; essentially the last, for after it the doom was fixed, and all was scarcely more than epilogue, merely the last struggles of the dying, the last stroke of the *coup de grâce*.

In May, four hundred thousand men of the Grand Army had crossed the Niemen to crush the great barbaric northern empire; in December, scarcely twenty thousand baffled, beaten men crossed the Niemen again, the Grand Army broken and destroyed for ever; fire and frost sweeping it away as if it had been something elemental only to be crushed by elemental forces. Hundreds of thousands dying, one by one, on battle fields, in exhausting marches, of hunger, of cold, of wounds; and, among all the dying, it was said, scarcely one murmur against the man for whom and through whom, in various tortures, and for no purpose, they died. The Triumph of Loyalty (misplaced as it might be) after all greater than the Triumph of Death; thus reviving for the human race capable of so enduring and so sacrificing a

hope, out of the very depths of the misery to which it was sacrificed.

"With Christ instead of Bonaparte, for the King of Kings!" my father said, "what might our race have done—what may it not yet do?"

Yet once again, France responded to the well-known call. Bonaparte, baffled and defeated, with the loss of nearly half a million, not to be hidden by the most grandiloquent bulletins from the thousands of homes whence they were missed, yet had power to gather two hundred and fifty thousand more to encounter the nations at Leipzig; boys four-fifths of them, reluctant and untrained, yet once under the magic of that imperial name and command, able to win the day in more than one hard-fought fight.

Nevertheless, the great destructive power of Napoleon was broken.

It was no more a conflict of dynasties, but a combat of nations. Never was a truer name given to a battle than that of "Battle of the Nations" (*Völkerschlacht*), claimed for Leipzig.

After his defeat there, Bonaparte knew that for him universal empire was over.

Professors, pastors, parents stirred sons, students, congregations to this war of liberation of the fatherland. Ancient history, Bible history, ceased to belong only to the past. The old heroic stories lived again, and became a source of inspiration for the defence of all that was sacred in life, or all that was more sacred than life. Songs and bal-

lads, strong and fresh as at the dawn of history, rang from the hearts and lips of the nation.

In one sense, indeed, Bonaparte had created. He had created by destroying. He had renewed through death. At Jena, but seven years before, he had crushed and broken and dismembered the various states of the old Teutonic empire. At Leipzig, he found springing from the scattered ashes a new, patriotic, living Germany. Out of ruin had sprung restoration; out of states a nation. And against nations the destroyer had no power.

France, indeed, seemed, like the demoniac in the Gospels, still not to be able to free herself from the awful double personality which had so long possessed her. Bewildered, fettered, and bleeding, she seemed still to answer at her tyrant's bidding through her reluctant conscripts, "My name is Legion, for we are many." But even this was soon to cease. The terrible delusion was becoming disentangled from her being.

In the South of France, where our Wellington with the first army which had proved Bonaparte's not "Invincible," was pursuing the retreating French troops, paying his way according to the bourgeois code of honor of "the nation of shopkeepers;" and, as we heard, welcomed by the natives of the Garonne districts with indications of the old fortresses which our ancestors had once held, and with friendly inquiries why we did not come back.

And in April, at Fontainebleau, Bonaparte

signed the abdication, leaving, as most of us then fondly thought, France once more clothed and in her right mind, at the feet of her ancient kings.

Then in our England, followed three months of rejoicing such as England had seldom seen. The very skies seemed to rejoice. The old country for a time threw off her veil of clouds, and shone and laughed, as the green English land can shine and smile through all her sunny uplands, and grassy meadows and wooded river slopes, to welcome the Allied Powers, and her own victorious soldiers, and peace.

Abbot's Weir was beside itself with delight. If England had her Wellington to be borne from the sea-coast at Dover, like an ancient hero, on the shoulders of the enthusiastic men of Kent; and if London had its three nights of illumination and its three weeks of festivity, leading the allied powers to think there was no poverty in the land, (and also inconceivable plunder in the city); if the House of Commons rose to receive and thank our Duke—for we had now our Duke as truly as our King—while he sat loyally to receive the homage so fully his due, if Oxford had her Greek and Latin gratulatory speeches; we also in Abbot's Weir, in our manner, had our festivities, to us as imposing and important.

Had not Abbot's Weir also her heroic sons to welcome? And foremost of them was our cousin Captain Fyford, wounded at Trafalgar, and worn

and battered by many a stormy day since on the transport service for the Peninsular Army.

The spirit of old Elizabethan dramatic days had come over us, not imitatively, but by the old inspiration. We were to have something approaching a Masque or Mystery; although altogether ignoring any alliance with mediæval mummeries or papistical pomps.

There was to be a review of the gallant volunteers, and a sham-fight; to end in the triumphal chairing of our cousin Dick as the representative of the British forces, and the banishment of Bonaparte, (in the shape of an apothecary of small stature and military bearing, great among the volunteers, who consented to be victimized for the public good,) to an island in the middle of our river, designed to represent the Island of Elba.

It was a day of great festivity; too really glad and natural to be riotous and irregular. The country poured itself into the town; flowers and green boughs and garlands and triumphal arches embowering the streets and festooning the windows; the farmers and laborers with their wives and children flocking in on foot through all the green and flower-strewn lanes, or in merry groups, on pillions, and in wagons; while every householder in the town kept open house, and tables were spread in the streets.

The review of our volunteers on the Down went off in a way to convince us that had Napoleon had his coveted command of the Channel for

twelve hours and landed, Abbot's Weir at least would have had little to fear.

On the Down, nature herself entered like the gayest of the revellers into our holiday, lavishing the sunshine of her clearest skies, and from the golden gardens of furze-blossom filling the fresh-breezy air with delicate fragrance.

Captain Fyford having been duly honored in the capacity of representative of the British Forces, and the military apothecary having been safely banished to the Island of Elba, all returned to take their share in the feastings and the speechifyings, and afterwards in the dance in the old market-house. And it was still early in the night when the entertainments were over, and the merry-makers had broken up into various groups, large or small, and were scattering through the lanes to village and hamlet, and solitary farmsteads among the hills.

All day the children had been with us, keeping close to me and Claire; rather awed and stilled than excited by this universal holiday, and by this mysterious bursting of the whole adult population into play.

Little Horace and Patience especially, the motherless twins, being timid children, would scarcely let go my hands. They seemed to feel as if the world had been turned upside down, and the serious part of it had devolved on them.

Claire and I had thought Patience a little feverish; and after the dance she went with me to

see if the motherless little ones were sleeping peacefully in the old vicarage.

We went alone together through the churchyard where our beloved were sleeping.

The town was growing hushed and quiet; only, now and then the voices of the returning country people calling to each other, sounded back from various distances along the valley and up the hills.

It was so still, that we could hear the rush of the river as we went on towards the vicarage garden by which it flowed.

Softly we went up to the children's nursery; and there we found both the little ones sleeping tranquilly in their cots; and Claire and I tucked them up and kissed them, and then went down together into the garden.

"It was a fancy," she said, "but I did not like the motherless little ones not to have something like a mother's kiss and care to-night."

And we went back through the churchyard.

We paused together a little by our sacred places there.

"The mothers, and the motherless!" she murmured. "I cannot bear to feel they are left out. Two resting-places. The children are asleep; and there is quiet here."

"But not sleep or dreams, Claire," I said; "the real life has begun for them. We watch by the sleep of the little ones unseen; and they surely watch by us."

"And yet *this* life is no dream!" she said; that life to her so rich and full and precious.

"Only as compared with the waking by-and-by," I said; "the life they have been awakened to,—my mother and yours; and the mother of those little ones; and the poor mother whose love cost her such anguish; and Loveday, who used to spread her motherly wings over us all."

We stood some minutes silent there, while the quiet flow of the river grew more and more audible.

And then the old church bells chimed out mid-night—the deep silvery tones which sounded from far away through the centuries.

"*Praise God,*" they chimed, as on the first night of the century.

Since then how many dear voices, then with us "creatures here below," had passed among "the heavenly host!"

Yet still it was one choir, and one song, to which the old bells set the tune.

We were turning away, when Piers and Captain Fyford came to look for us, and went home with us through the silent streets to the old house on the market-place.

And then Captain Fyford made a request to me, in broken and doubtful words, which at the time seemed strange and scarcely possible to grant; but which I thought of again and again, and at last found I could not help granting.

“It would make so little difference,” as Uncle Fyford had said of his first marriage.

And yet it has made all the difference to me.



,” as Uncle
ce to me.



CHAPTER XXXIX.

SO it came about that once more there reigned a stepmother and a motherless little boy and girl in our old house at home.

And that impressive moral tale which was the romance and consolation of my childhood, of how I would behave to little children situated as Piers and I were, had an opportunity of being translated into fact.

“So runs the round of life from hour to hour.”

Yet it is never the same round. The outward forms and scenes may be the same; but the whole inward life which makes the real drama varies endlessly. The very sameness constitutes the difference. We need never fear monotony in a world where God organizes every leaf diversely, and creates personalities as individual as Adam's; and in which circumstance, and sin, and conflict twist these into varieties so inconceivable. The type endlessly various; and endlessly diverged from.

Therefore the morals of those very “pointed”

tales of my childhood never came precisely into play.

My temptations and my poor stepmother's from within and without, were by no means the same.

In the first place, my step-children and I began by loving each other very dearly; and if I shrank determinedly, as I did, from assuming Patience's rights and titles, and being called "mother," it mattered comparatively little to them, because it so happened that "Cousin Bride" had long been to them a name expressive of the person who loved them best in the world.

And in the second place, by no compact or command or sanction, it nevertheless came to pass that I had to submit, in the end, to being called "mother." When or how it began I cannot recall; but I could not forbid to these first-born children the name my own children called me.

The truth would have been rather violated than preserved by my rejecting it, although I often tried to show both Horace and Patience that they were better off even than my own, having always that other sacred and undying love watching over them and awaiting them above.

Our home was not that worst desecration of an erection over forgotten graves. It was as a tent on the sacred threshold.

That first gleam of peace which we had all celebrated as permanent passed away. War came again; and Waterloo and St Helena.

And the warfare which Loveday had cared for,

which, as we believed, she was ever caring for still --was carried on to other stages, and through new combatants, although many of the veterans lived yet to carry on the war.

Faithfully Clapham did its part in the combat; and faithfully the Moravian and Methodist missionaries (with our Amice and Hervé Godefroy among them) did theirs.

Clapham, with its offshoots and dependencies grew richer and more prosperous; and its generosity kept pace with its wealth.

How could it help growing rich?

Being religious makes people prudent and energetic; being prudent and energetic, makes people, in the main, rich. And if being rich does not always help people to remain religious, once more from the depths, from the poor, God calls His rich—rich in faith—and stroges, through the prayer and fasting by which only the worst "kind" of "foul spirit" goeth out. And thus the healthy air circulates, and the world is kept sweet, by light and fragrance, and by salt and fire.

Clapham held meetings, and brought bills into Parliament, and subscribed tens and hundreds of thousands, and from its suburban Paradises not only "visited" the prisons, but reformed them; not only gave alms to the poor, but educated them out of poverty; not only visited the sick, but healed them in hospitals and convalescent homes; it allured congregations by the thousand and set them to work on the millions.

And, meanwhile, in Persia Henry Martyn, sent forth from its midst, toiled, and preached and died, alone; and left but one convert; but inspired countless other lives.

My cousins married; Harriet the "Reformer" a devoted clergyman who lived and toiled in the missionary field, unpicturesque and illimitable, of the low districts of London; Phœbe went to be the comfort of her husband's country parish; Matilda married a wealthy merchant, and admired and assisted other people's excellent works to her heart's content; every one of them bearing with them, wherever they went, the sunshine and sweetness of that bright early home, from which little Martha had early passed away, leaving the most fragrant memory of all.

And Amice and Hervé Godefroy, with their Moravians, worked on also in their own place, not exactly prosperous, not growing at all rich, sorely tried often, often failing in health; but sometimes overpaid with such rare, unutterable delights as only such service enfolds; by seeing hearts that had seemed dead wake up, and live, and rejoice, and serve; by seeing sufferings nobly borne and nobly avenged, evil conquered by good,—patient, faithful lives crowned by joyful death.

Some of their slaves they emancipated and sent to the new free colony of Sierra Leone. And among the rest the labor proved, so far, not in vain, that at the general emancipation in 1832, the islands in which missionary work had been most

encouraged, found themselves able to anticipate the period of apprenticeship, and to trust the slaves with immediate freedom.

And then their work, as far as they could do it, was done. They had parted with their children long before, to be brought up in the bracing English climate, away from the enervating influences, physical and moral, around them there.

But they themselves stayed till the emancipation. Having put their hands to the plough, they turned not back.

And then at last they returned, and took a cottage on the hills near us, hoping that the vigor of the moorland air would restore the vigor they—but chiefly Captain Godefroy—had lost.

Their reward was not visibly here; except indeed for that best reward of doing good work, and for the rare blessedness of that incomparable companionship of a perfect marriage during the years which they were given to spend together; years, one of which had more life in it than many a lifetime.

Not on the heights; low among the heavy-laden, helping them to bear the burdens, Amice had thought this the highest. And God gave her her highest; I think also His highest, the place His highest took on earth.

“We need not try to make life hard to ourselves,” Amice had once said, speaking of Clapham; “what are the little pin-pricks we can inflict on ourselves? When God wounds, it is wound-

ing; and we learn—learn to suffer as He suffered. And when he heals, it *is* healing; and we learn more—learn in our measure to heal as He healed.” And so she found it—my Amice, our Amice, the treasure and the succor of us all.

* * * * *

Twenty-five years from that abolition in 1807, through wars and adversity, and victory and peace, and again through new wars and new peace, that great anti-slavery conflict went steadfastly on, until, in 1832, the Vittoria, Leipzig, and Elba of the first war were succeeded by the Waterloo of the real final victory; the twenty millions sterling freely given by England to redeem herself and Africa from the great wrong; the banishment of the iniquity for ever from all lands over which England held sway.

To the last the veteran leader, William Wilberforce, lived and fought on; at the very last (by one of those weird repetitions of history which reads like the refrain of a dirge), like Pitt and Fox in the first campaigns of the war, dying, if not before the victory was won, yet before the day of triumph dawned. And the whole House of Commons followed him to his grave in Westminster Abbey.

The sixty years war was over; once more, evil had been conquered by good.

A conflict still, as we know, to be succeeded by other conflicts elsewhere, in the same cause; never

indeed to be finished, until the iniquity shall be banished utterly from the world.

And then, and then ?

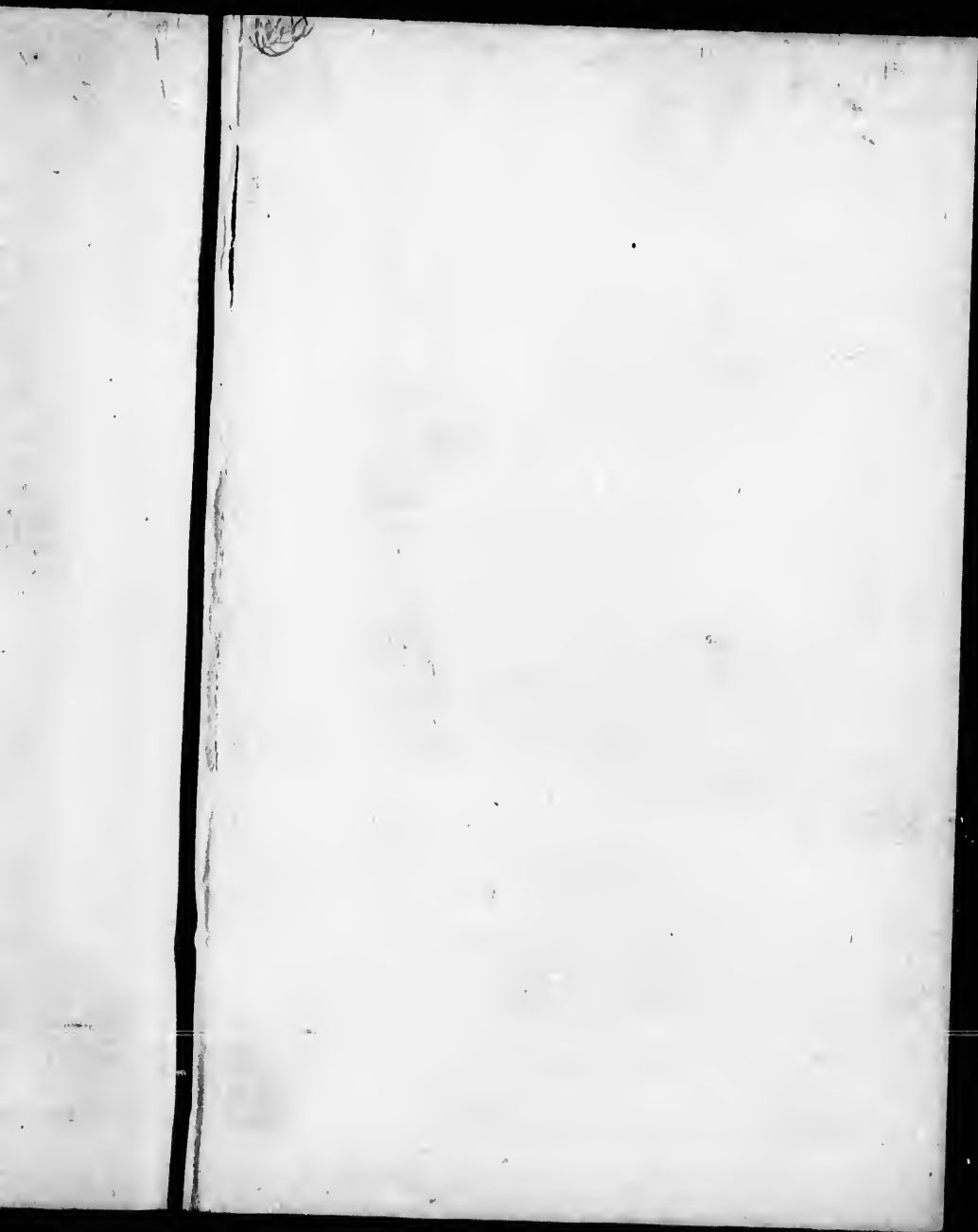
Other wrongs, other slaveries, other warfares, other victories ; as long as the source of all wrongs and all bondage remains in man ; the great mystery of iniquity, beside which all else that we call darkness is penetrable, the awful liberty involved in the very power to love and to obey which must involve the possibility of the slavery of selfishness and disobedience.

Patiently, for more than half a century, that great anti-slavery struggle went on ; the "moral atmosphere," which we call public opinion, slowly clearing and becoming healthy in the only way in which "moral atmospheres" ever do clear and become healthy ; not by any volcanic irresistible convulsion, as of the elements ; nor by slow inevitable diffusion, as of the seasons ; but by a strenuous keeping or restoring of the sanitary laws ; by a laborious clearing and planting, and embanking, and draining away of everything that causes malaria ; by a few brave and patient men, often at first by only one, refusing to drift smoothly along with the evil current of the times, but pulling resolutely Against the Stream.

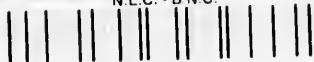
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