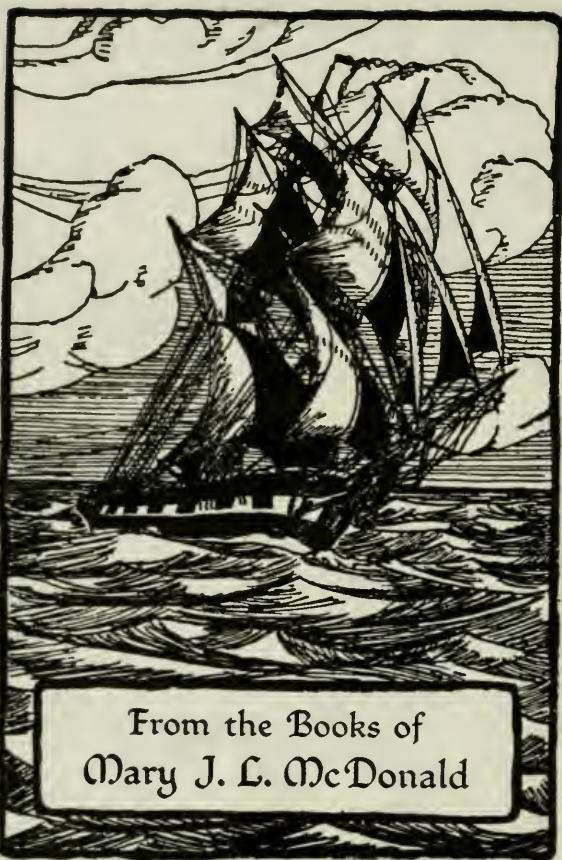


DONAL GRANT



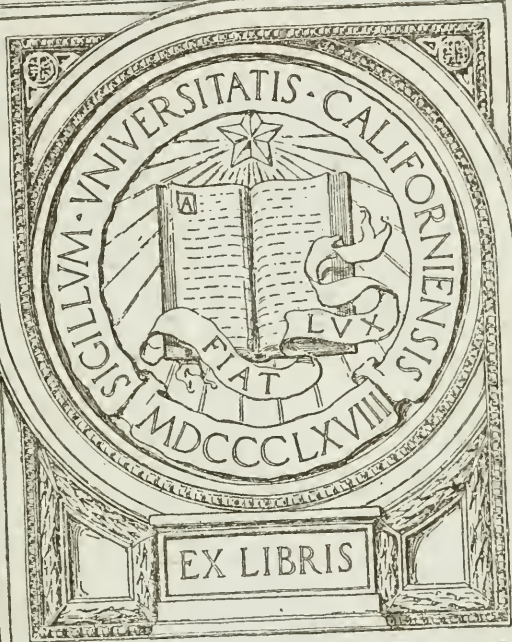


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DONAL GRANT

BY
GEORGE MACDONALD

Author of "Warlock o' Glenwarlock," "Weighed and Wanting," "Seaboard Parish," "Annals of a Quiet Neighborhood," etc.

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Mary J. L. McDonald

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DONAL GRANT.

CHAPTER I.

FOOT FARING.

IT was a lovely morning in the first of summer. Yes, we English, whatever we may end with, always begin with the weather, and not without reason. We have more moods, though less subject to them, I hope, than the Italians. Therefore we are put in the middle of weather. They have no weather; where there is so little change, there is at least little to call weather. Weather is the moods of the world, and we need weather good and bad — at one time healing sympathizer with mood, at another fit expression for, at yet another fit corrective to, mood. God only knows in how many ways he causes weather to serve us.

It was a lovely morning in the first of summer. Donal Grant was on a hillside, descending a path to the valley below — a sheep-track of which he knew every winding as well as any boy his half-mile to and from school. But he had never before gone down the hill with the feeling that he was not about to go up it again. He was on his way to pastures very new, and in the distance only negatively inviting. But his

heart was too full to be troubled, though his was not a heart to harbor a care — the next thing to an evil spirit, though not quite so bad ; for one care drives out another, while one devil is pretty sure to bring in another.

A great billowy waste of mountains lay beyond him, amongst which played the shadows at their games of hide and seek — graciously merry in the eyes of the happy man, but sadly solemn in the eyes of him in whose heart the dreary thoughts of the past are at a like game. Behind Donal lay a world of dreams into which he dared not consciously turn and look, yet from which he had no sooner turned his eyes than they returned of themselves to gaze. He was nearing the foot of the hill when he stumbled and nearly fell, but recovered himself with the agility of a mountaineer, and the unpleasant knowledge that the sole of one of his shoes was all but off. Never had he left home for college that his father had not made personal inspection of his shoes to see that he was fittingly shod for the journey ; but on this occasion they had been forgotten. He sat down and took off the failing equipment. It was too far gone for him to do anything temporary with it ; and of discomforts a loose sole to one's shoe in walking is of the worst. The only thing was to take off the other shoe and both stockings and walk barefoot. The shoes and stockings he tied together with a piece of string, and made them fast to his deer-skin knapsack. The misfortune did not trouble him much. To have what we want is riches, but to be able to do without is power. To have shoes is a good thing ; to be able to walk without them is a better. But it was long since

Donal had walked barefoot, and he found his feet like his shoe, weaker in the sole than was pleasant.

“It was time,” he said to himself, when he found himself stepping gingerly, “that I gae my feet a turn at the auld accomplishment. It’s a pity to grow less fit for onything sooner than ye need. I wad like to lie doon at last wi’ hard soles!”

In every stream he came to he bathed his feet, and often on the way rested them, when able enough otherwise to go on. He had no certain goal, though he knew whither first he was bending his steps, and in no haste. He had confidence in God, and in his own powers as the gift of God, and knew that wherever he went he needed not be hungry long, even should all the little money in his pocket be spent. It is better to trust in work than in money; God never buys anything, and is forever at work; but if any one does trust in work, he has yet to learn that he must trust in nothing but strength — the self-existent, original strength only; and Donal Grant had long begun to learn that. And the man has begun to be strong who has begun to know that, separated from life essential, that is God, he is weakness itself, but of strength inexhaustible if he be one with his origin. Donal was now descending the heights of youth to walk along the king’s highroad of manhood, happy he who, as his sun is going down behind the western, is himself ascending the eastern hill, returning through old age to the second and better childhood which shall not be taken from him. For he who turns his back on the setting sun goes to meet the rising sun; and he who loses his life shall find it. Donal seemed to have lost his past — but he had not lost it so as to be

ashamed. There are many ways of losing! it had but crept back, like the dead, to God who gave it; in better shape it would be his by and by! Already he had begun to foreshadow this truth. Consenting God would keep it for him.

He had started before the sun was up, for he would not be met by friends or acquaintances. Avoiding the well-known villages at the foot of the hill, he followed the path up the river, and about noon came to a small village where no one knew him; it was just a cluster of straw-roofed cottages low and white, with two little windows each. He walked straight through it not meaning to stop. But spying in front of the last one a rough stone seat under a low but wide-spreading elder-tree, he sat down to rest a little. For the day was now hot, and the shadow of the tree inviting.

He had but seated himself when a woman came to the door of the cottage. She looked at him for a moment, then, probably thinking him, from his bare feet, poorer than he was, said —

“Wad ye like a drink?”

“Ay, wad I,” answered Donal — “a drink ’o water, gien ye please.”

“What for no milk?” asked the woman.

“’Cause I’m able to pay for’t,” answered Donal.

“But I want nae payment,” she rejoined, perceiving his drift as little as my reader probably.

“An’ I want nae milk,” returned Donal.

“Weel, ye may pay for’t gein ye like,” she said.

“But I dinna like,” replied Donal.

“Weel, ye’re a some queer customer!” she remarked.

“ I thank ye, but I'm nae customer, 'cep' for a drink 'o watter,” he persisted, looking in her face with a smile, “ an' watter has ay been gratis sin' the days 'o Adam, 'cep' maybe i' toons 'i the het countries.”

The woman turned into the cottage, and came out again presently with a delft basin, holding about a pint, full of milk, yellow and rich.

“ There,” she said, “ drink an' be thankfu'.”

“ I'll be thankfu' ohn drunken,” said Donal. “ I thank ye wi' a' my hert. But I canna bide to be shabby nor greedy. I canna bide to tak for naething what I can pey for, an' I dinna like to lay oot my siler upon a luxury I can weel eneuch du wantin', for I haena muckle.”

“ Drink for the luve 'o God,” said the woman.

Donal took the bowl from her hand, and drank till all was gone.

“ Wull ye hae a drap mair? ” she asked.

“ Na, no a drap,” answered Donal. “ I'll gan 'i the stren'th 'o the milk ye hae gi'en me — maybe no jist forty days, gudewife, but mair nor forty minutes, an' that's a gude pairt 'o a day. I thank ye hertily. Yon was the milk 'o human kin'ness, gien ever was ony.”

As he spoke he rose, and stood up refreshed to renew his journey.

“ I hae a sodger laddie awa' 'i the het country ye spak o',” said the woman. “ Gien ye hadna ta'en the milk, ye wad hae gi'en me a sair hert.”

“ Eh, gudewife, it wad hae gi'en me ane to think I had!” replied Donal. “ The Lord gie ye back yer laddie safe an' soon! Maybe I'll hae to gang efter 'im, an' be a sodger mysel'.”

“Na, na, that wadna do. Ye’re a scholar — that’s easy to see, for a’ ye’re sae plain spoken. It dis a body’s hert guid to hear a man ’at un’erstan’s things say them plain oot in the tongue his mither taucht him. Sic a ane ’ill gang straucht till’s makker, an’ fin’ a’thing there hame-like. Lord, I wuss ministers wad speyk like ither fowk !”

“Ye wad sair please my mither speykin’ like that,” said Donal. “Ye maun be jist sic anither as her !”

“Weel, come in, an’ sit ye doon oot ’o the sun, an’ hae something to ait.”

“Na, I’ll tak nae mair frae ye the day ; an’ I thank ye,” replied Donal ; “I canna weel bide.”

“What for no ?”

“It’s no sae muckle ’at I’m in a hurry as ’at I maun be doin’.”

“Whar are ye b’un’ for, gien a body may spier ?”

“I’m gaein to seek — no my fortin, but my daily breid. Gein I spak as a richt man sud be able to do, I wad say I was gaein’ to’ luik for the wark set me. I’m feart to say that straucht oot ; I doobt I haena won sae far as that yet. I winna du naething though ’at he wadna hae me du. I daur to say that, sae be I un’erstan’. My mither says the day ’ill come when I’ll care for naething but his wull.”

“Yer mither ’ill be Janet Grant, I’m thinkin’ ; for I dinna believe there can be twa sic in ae country-side.”

“Ye’re ’i the richt,” answered Donal. “Ken ye my mither ?”

“I hae seen her ; an’ to see her’s to ken her.”

“Aye, gien wha sees her be sic like’s hersel’.”

“I canna preten to that ; but she’s weel kent for

a God-fearin' woman. An' whaur 'll ye be gaein' i' the noo?"

"I'm jist upo' the tramp, luikin' for wark."

"An' what may ye be pleast to ca' wark?"

"Ow, jist the communication 'o what I hae the un'erstan'in' o'."

"Aweel, gien ye'll condescen' to tak advice frae an auld wife, ye'll tak heed o' ae thing—an' that's this: no to tak ilka lass ye see for a born angel. Misdoobt her a wee to begin wi'. Jist hing up yer jeedgment for a wee, as ye wad yer Sunday hat. Luik to the moo' an' the e'en o' her."

"I thank ye," said Donal, with a feeble attempt at a smile, "but I'm no like to need the advice."

The woman looked at him pitifully for a moment and paused.

"Gien ye come this gait again," she said, "ye'll no gang by my door?"

"I wull no," replied Donal.

He wished her good-by with a grateful heart, and betook himself again to his journey.

He had not gone far when he found himself on a wide moor. A little way on he saw a big stone. He went to it, and sitting down began to turn things over in his mind. And this is something how his thoughts went:

"I can never be the man I was! the thought o' my heart's ta'en frae me. I canna think aboot things the same w'y I used. There's naething sae bonny as afore. Whan the life slips frae him, hoo can a man gang on livin'! An' yet I'm no deid—that's what maks the diffeeclety o' the situation! Gien I war deid—weel, I kenna what than; I doobt there

wad be trible still, though some things micht be lichter. But that's neither here nor there; I maun live; I hae nae ch'ice; I'm no gaein' to take the thing ^{at}til my ain han's — I think mair o' mysel' nor claur that! I didna mak mysel' and I'm no gaein' to meddle wi' mysel'!

“But there's jist ae question I maun saddle afore I gang farther, an' that's this: whether I'm gaein' to be less or mair nor I was afore. It's agreed I canna be the same. If I canna be the same, I maun aither be less or greater than I was afore; whilk of them is't to be! I winna hae that question to speir mair nor ance! Gien it be possible I'll be mair nor I was. To sink to less wad be to lowse grip o' a' my past as weel's a' my futur? Hoo wad I ever luik her i' the face gien I grew less because o' her! What would it be for a stoot chiel' like me to lat the bonny lassie think hersel' to blame for what I was grown til! An' there's a greater nor the lass to be consider't 'Cause he disna see fit to gie me the ane I wad hae am I to say he's no to hae his wull o' me? Na, na! — it's a gran' thing to hae kent a lassie like yon, an a gran'er thing yet to hae been allooed to lo'e her; an' to sit doon an' greit 'cause I canna merry her, wad jist be to be an oongratefu' fule. What for sud I threip 'at I oucht to hae her? What for sudna I be disapp'intit as weel as anither? I hae as guid richt as anither to ony guid 'at's to come o' that, I fancy. Gien it to be the pairt o' man to cairry a sair hert, it's no his pairt to sit doon wi't upo' the ro'dside, an' lay't upo' his lap an' greit ower't; he maun haud on his ro'd. Wha am I 'at I sud fare different frae the, lave o' my fowk? I's be like the lave, an' gien

I greit I winna girn. The Lord himsel' had to croont wi' pain. Eh, my bonny doo! but ye lo'e a better man, an' that's a sair comfort! Gien it had been itherwise, I div not think I could hae borne the pain i' my hert. But as it's guid an' no ill 'at's come to ye, I haena you an' mysel' tu greit for, an' that's a sair comfort! Lord, I'll clim' to thee, and gaither o' the healin' 'at grows for the nations upo' the tree o' life.

“I see the thing as plain's a thing can be; the cure o' a' ill's naiter mair nor less nor mair life. That's it! Life abune an' ayont the life 'at took the stroke! An' gien throw this hert-brak I get mair life, it'll be jist ane o' the throes o' my h'avenly birth — i' the whilk the bairn has as mony o' the pains as the mither — that's maybe a differ a'tween the twa!

“Sae noo I hae to begin fresh, an' lat the thing 'at's past an' gane slip efter ither dreams. Eh, but it's a bonny dream yet! It lies close 'ahin' me, no to be forgotten, no to be luikit at — like ane o' thae dreams o' watter an' munelicht 'at has ower little wark in them. A body wadna lie a' nicht an' a' day tu in a dream o' the sowl's gloamin. Na, Lord, mak o' me a strong man, an' syne gie me as muckle o' the bonny as may please thee. Wha am I to lippen til, gien no to thee, my ain father an' mither an' gran'father an' a'body in ane for thoo ga'est me them a'!

“Noo, as I say, I'm to begin again — a fresh life frae this verra minute. I'm to set oot frae this verra p'int like ane o' the youngest sons i' the fairy tales to seek my portion, an' see what's gaein' to come to meet me as I gang to meet hit. The warl' afore me's my story-buik. I canna see ower the leaf till I come

to the en' o' 't. ' I never wad, when I was a bairn, jist able by sore endeavour to win at the hert o' print,— I never wad luik on afore — that is, efter ance 'at I did it, for thought I had dune a shamefu' thing, like luikin' in at a keyhole — as I did jist ance tu an' I thank God my mither gae me sic a blessed lickin' for duin o' 't 'at I kent it maun be something dreidfu'. Sae here's for what's comin' ! I ken whaur it maun come frae, an' I's make it welcome. My mither says the main mscheef i' the warl' is, 'at fowk winna lat the Lord hae his ain w'y an' sae he has jist to tak it, whilk maks it a sair thing for them."

So saying, he rose, and set out again on his bare feet to encounter that which was on its way to meet him. He is a fool who stands and lets life flow past him like a panorama. He also is a fool who thinks to lay hold of its machinery, and change its pictures for better ones. He may, he must, he can only distort and injure — even ruin them. When he destroys them he comes upon awful shadows behind them.

And lo! as he glanced around him, already something of the old look of mysterious loveliness, now for so many weeks gone from the face of the visible world, had returned to it — not yet as it was before, but with dawning promise of a new creation, which, without destroying the old, was about to bring in a fresh beauty, in which he was to live without any self-reproach of change and forgetting; he was not turning from the old, but accepting the new that God gave him. He might yet be often and for many a day sad, but to lament and mourn would be to act as if he thought himself wronged — would be to be poor and weak and foolish. He would look the new

life in the face, and be what it pleased God to make him. The scents the wind brought with it on its way over field and garden and moor, came to him sweeter than ever they had seemed in his life before; they seemed seeking to comfort him. And if he turned from the thought that followed with a sigh, it was only to turn to God instead, and then came fresh gladness and no rebuff. The wind hovered about him in a friendly way, as if it would fain have something to do in the matter; the river rippled and shone, as if it knew something worth knowing which had yet to be revealed. For the delight of creation is verily in secrets, but in secrets only as revelations upon the way; the Lord has taught us that in heaven itself there is no delight in secrets as secrets, but as embryo revelations. On the far horizon heaven and earth seemed to meet as old friends, who, though never parted, were yet in the continual act of renewing their friendship. The earth, like the angels, was rejoicing — if not over a sinner that had repented, yet over a man that had passed from a lower into a higher condition of life — out of its earth into its air. He was going to live above, and look down on the lower world. And ere the shades of evening began that day to fall around Donal Grant, he was already in the new childhood of a new world.

I do not mean such *thoughts* had never been present to him before; but to *think* a thing is only to look at it in a glass — to know it as God would have us know it, and as we must know it to live, is to see it as we see love in a friend's eyes — to have it as the love the friend sees in ours. To make things real to us, is the end and the battle-cause of life.

We often think we believe what we are only presenting to our imaginations. The least thing can overthrow that kind of faith. The imagination is an endless help towards faith, but it is no more faith than a dream of food will make us strong for the next day's work. To know God as the beginning and end, the root and cause, the giver, the enabler, the love and joy and perfect good, the present one existence in all things and degrees and conditions, is life. And faith, in its simplest, truest, mightiest form, is — to do his will in the one thing revealing itself at the moment as duty. The faith that works miracles is an inferior faith to this — and not what the old theologians call a saving faith.

Donal was making his way towards the eastern coast, in the certain hope of finding work of one kind or another. He could have been well content to pass his life as a shepherd like his father, but for two things mainly; first, that he felt he knew things which it might be useful for others to know as well, and he could, therefore, do more by being something else than a shepherd; and, second, he had a hunger after the company of books, which company was not to be had in the position of a shepherd, either by way of borrowing where no library was near, or by way of purchase where money was so scarce. A man must, of course, be able to do without whatever is denied him; but when the heart is hungry for any honest thing, a man may use his honest endeavor to obtain that thing. So Donal desired to make his gifts useful to others, and so live for his generation, and to be able to buy books — except, indeed, he were sent to a place with a good library, where he

could have all the use of books without buying ; that would suit him better yet — for without a place in which to keep them, books are among the *impedimenta* of life. But if Donal was in any danger of loving the things of this world, it was in the shape of books — books he had a strong inclination to accumulate and hoard. Books themselves, however, even are, considered as possessions, only of the things that pass and perish ; and he who loves them so must see them vanish from him as certainly as any other form of earthly having. Love alone lives, and causes all other truth to take shape, conscious or unconscious. But God lets men have their playthings, like the children they are, that they may learn to distinguish them from true possessions. If they are not learning that, he takes them from them, and tries the other way : for lack of them and its misery, they will perhaps seek the true !

Who would have thought, meeting the youth as he walked along the road on shoeless feet, that he sought the goal of a great library in some old house, where day after day he might feast on the thoughts of men who had gone before him. His was no anti-quarian soul, but one hungry after all attainable forms of life, and that because of the life that was in them, not because of the mummy cloths in which that life was wrapt. He loved the beauty for the truth, the style for the thought.

He was now walking southwards, but would soon, when he had left the mountains well behind him, turn towards the east. He carried a small wallet, filled chiefly with oatcake and hard skim-milk cheese ; and about two o'clock he sat down on a stone, and, taking

it from his back, proceeded to make a meal. A little stream from the hills ran near. He had chosen his place where was something at hand to counteract the dryness of his fare. He never took any other drink than water. Before he went to college his mother had begged him, and he had promised, never to take strong drink. She did not use the figure, but what she said amounted to this — that at best it but discounted to him his own at a high rate. He drew from his pocket a small thick volume which he had brought as the companion of his journey, and began to read. His seat was on the last slope of a grassy hill, many huge stones rising out of the grass. A few yards below was a country road, and on the other side of the road a small stream into which the brook that ran swiftly past the stone on which he sat eagerly fell and lost itself. On the farther bank of the stream grew many bushes of meadow-sweet, or *queen-of-the-meadow*, for so it is called in Scotland; and beyond lay a lovely meadow. Beyond the meadow all was a plain, full of farms, stretching eastward. Behind him rose the high hill, shutting out his past. He had left it behind him. Before him lay the plain, a level way for him. It seemed as if God had walled up his past, and left his future open. He felt, not thought this, through the words he read as he munched his cheese, all its dryness forgotten in the condiment his book supplied. When he had eaten as much as he thought his need could claim, he took his cap from his head, and going to the stream, filled it, drank heartily, threw away what was left, shook the last drops out of it, and put it again upon his head.

“Ho, ho, young man!” cried a voice.

Donal looked, and saw a man in the garb of a clergyman, regarding him from the road, and wiping his face with his sleeve.

“You should mind,” he went on, “how you scatter your favors.”

“I beg your pardon, sir,” said Donal, taking off again the cap he had just put on: “I hadna a notion there was a leevin’ cratur near me.”

“It’s a fine day,” said the minister.

“It is that, sir,” answered Donal.

“Which way are you going?” asked the minister, adding, as if in apology for his seeming curiosity, “you’re a scholar, I see!” and glancing towards the book he had left open upon the stone where he had been sitting.

“No sae muckle o’ that as I wad fain be, sir,” answered Donal — then called to mind a resolve he had made, to endeavor to speak English for the future.

He had hitherto always laughed at the affected attempts after English he had heard from some of the students, for he could not see that anything was gained, while much was lost, by the gradual decay of sound Scotch in the country, and the replacing of it with a mere bastard English. But it was worth while to be able to speak good modern English; and he saw it was of no use to attempt withstanding the tide of growth, mingled as it was with so much unnecessary change. He saw also that, no principal of right or wrong being concerned, it would be of consequence, when he sought a situation, that he should not seem so deficient as the language of the hillside

would make him appear. He would use his mother-tongue in private for the high uses of life and spirit — for devotion and verse; would talk to his God and Saviour in the sacred mother-tongue, and write at least his songs in it; but would speak as good English as he could, at best only book-English, to those about him, doing his best to keep from mixing the two, and spoiling both.

I do not care in this my narrative to represent with accuracy the transition from the one mode of speech to the other. The result of his endeavor was, doubtless, sometimes a little amusing, but it was not often ridiculous, because Donal was free from affectation, as a strong man naturally is. Things were to him good in their own truth and fact, and he had no desire to dress them in the tinsel of a vulgar fancy.

The true source of vulgarity, itself the most vulgar thing in the world, is ambition. Of this Donal had none, therefore could not be vulgar. He had, on the other hand, a powerful and active sense of the beauty of perfection, and loved finish in everything. He aspired after the best, a thing as different from ambition as heaven is from hell — so different that the one is the death of the other. Whatever Donal did he tried to do well. So now, when he went on speaking to the minister, he used something not a little like English, though not quite so like it as I shall represent it.

“You’re a modest youth I see!” returned the clergyman; but Donal hardly liked the tone in which he said it.

“That depends on what you mean by a scholar,” he said.

“O!” answered the minister, not thinking much

about his reply, but in a rather bantering humor, and willing to draw the lad out, "the learned man modestly calls himself a scholar."

"Then there is no modesty in my saying I was not so much of one as I should like to be, for every scholar would say the same. If you had said you meant a *learning* man, I would have claimed then to be a scholar."

"A very good answer, and a true distinction," said the clergyman, patronizingly. "But," he went on, "when would you say a man was a learned man?" And the minister smiled as he said it. He certainly was not prepared to answer the question himself.

"That wants thinking about," answered Donal. "It seems impossible for one learned man to say a thing but three or four other learned men start up to prove him all wrong in it!"

"There's some truth in that. But what good can there be then in being learned?"

"I would like to hear your answer to your own question, sir," said Donal.

"For one thing, you get the mental discipline," he answered.

"It seems to me," said Donal, "something of a pity to get one's discipline on things that may themselves be all nonsense. It's just as good discipline to my teeth here, to make my dinner of good bread and cheese, as if I had been trying what I could make of the grass that suits the sheep there."

"I've got hold of a humorist!" said the clergyman to himself. "Which way are you going?" he asked.

"Eastward now, I think," answered Donal.

As he spoke he picked up his wallet and his book,

and came down to the road where the clergyman stood. Then first the latter saw that he had no shoes. In his childhood the clergyman had himself often gone without shoes or socks, nevertheless the youth's lack of them gave him an unfavorable impression of him.

"Why, bless me! he hasn't a shoe to his foot! It must be the fellow's own fault!" he said to himself. "He must be a bad lot! But he needn't think to get anything out of me! He would fain show to have ideas about things, but he sha'n't catch me with such chaff!"

"I took my degree last session," said Donal, as he jumped the little hollow that separated the hill from the road, "and now I'm on my way to find a situation further south. Money seems to be a sort of tropical plant somehow!"

Had Donal been alone, he would have forded the river, and gone to inquire his way at the nearest farmhouse; but he thought it only polite to accompany the clergyman. The latter would have been better pleased if he had taken his own way. They walked some distance before either spoke. Each was doubtful of the other.

"Where do you mean to stop to-night?" asked the minister at length.

"Where I can. I don't care whether it be in a barn or on the hill-side in this weather."

"A young man like you, who has taken his degree," said the minister, not quite believing him, for there was a free look about Donal which he took to indicate lawlessness, "would do well, if he wants to get on, to pay some attention to appearances, and not lie out of doors except in extreme necessity."

“But, sir, you don't think what a decent bed costs; and a barn is generally, and a hill-side, always clean. In fact the hill-side's best of all. Many's the time I have slept out in the summer along with my sheep. Don't you think, sir,” continued Donal, “it's a strange notion some people have — that it's more respectable to sleep under a roof made by hand than under the roof built by the word of God?”

“It's not to be denied, however,” said the minister with caution, “that those who have no settled abode are amongst the most disreputable of society.”

“Like Abraham,” said Donal with a smile. “Some seem to me to think more of an abiding city than becomes pilgrims and strangers. I fell asleep once,” Donal continued, “upon the top of Glashgar. It's pretty fresh there any time, but I had my plaid. When I woke I almost believed myself a disembodied spirit, about to appear before my Maker. The sun was just looking over the edge of the horizon, and the earth away down below me ever so far, was all coming to life under his look. I rose and gazed about me as if that moment I had been made like Adam, all there at once. If God had that instant called me, I don't think I should have been the least astonished.”

“Or frightened?” suggested the minister, rather cynically.

“I don't think it, sir; I know no reason why a man should fear the presence of the only saviour of men.”

“You said your *maker*, not your *saviour*!” answered the minister.

“Are they then at two, and not at one in their

thoughts?" asked Donal. I have learnt that he is God our saviour! My greatest desire is to come into the presence of him with whom I have to do."

"Under the shelter of the atonement," said the minister.

"Hoots!" said Donal, forgetting his English "gien ye mean by that onything to come atween my God an' me, I'll hae nanè o' 't. I'll hae naething to hide me frae the ee o' him wha made me! That ee's the verra life o' men. I wadna hide a thocht frae him. The waur it is, the mair need for him to see't. It wad mak me meeserable to think there was onything i' me he wadna luik at an' see til."

"What book is that you are reading?" asked the minister sharply.

He was now fairly angry with the presumptuous youth — and no wonder; for the gospel the minister preached was a gospel but to the slavish and low-minded — and to others in proportion as the unfilial in them came in aid of their sense of duty to enable them to accept it.

"It's a poor copy of the poet Shelley," answered Donal, recovering himself.

Now, the minister had never read a word of the poet Shelley, and so had a very decided opinion concerning him; both the state of mind and the outward condition of the youth seemed to him now very sufficiently accounted for. He gave a loud rude whistle.

"So! that's where you go for your theology! I was, I confess, puzzled to understand you; but now all is very plain! — explained more clearly than satisfactorily! Young man, you are on the broad

road to destruction — nay, on the very brink of perdition. Such a writer will poison your very vitals!”

“Indeed, sir, he can’t well do that, for he has never reached my vitals yet. He doesn’t go deep enough for that! But he came nearer touching them — not with poison though — than ever before, as I sat there eating my bread and cheese.”

The minister, from the moment of this discovery, took all the straightforwardness of Donal’s speech for rudeness to what he called his cloth, and thence to himself. He thought he had the key to him when he was farther from finding it than ever.

“He’s an infidel!” he said fiercely.

“A kind of one, perhaps,” returned Donal, “but not of the worst sort. It’s the people who mistakenly or falsely call themselves believers that drive the like of poor Shelley to the mouth of the pit — such as he cannot endure their low, selfish ways. How many do you know, sir, of whom you would be ready to say to a man that didn’t believe, ‘Look — there is what Christianity makes of a man!’?”

“That has nothing to do with the matter. The truth is the truth, whatever be the behavior of those that profess it.”

“Yes; but such won’t make the truth look true to those that do not know it; and that was how they served Shelley.”

“He hated the truth,” said the minister.

“He was always seeking after it,” said Donal, “though to be sure he didn’t get very far in the search. But just listen to this, sir, and say whether it be not something not so very far astray from Christianity.”

So saying, Donal opened his little volume, and sought the passage he meant. The minister, who was one of the many who consciously or unconsciously seek the priesthood for ambition, was inclined, but for curiosity, joined to the dread of seeming absurd, to stop his ears and refuse to listen. He was a man of not only dry, but deadly stale doctrines, which continue to show a kind of galvanized life from the holding of one measure of truth and the hiding of another. He was one of those who would have us love Christ for protecting us from God, instead of for leading us to God — the one home of safety — in whom alone is bliss, out of whom all is darkness and misery. He had not a glimmer of the truth that eternal life is to know God. He imagined justice and love dwelling in eternal opposition in the bosom of eternal unity. He knew next to nothing about God, and misrepresented him hideously every Sunday. If God were such as he showed him, it would indeed be the worst possible misfortune to have been created, or have anything to do with God at all.

Donal had found the passage. It was from the "Mask of Anarchy," and contained amongst other stanzas which he read the following: —

Let a vast assembly be,
 And with great solemnity
 Declare with measured words **that ye**
 Are, as God made ye, free — ' 1

Be your strong and simple words
 Keen to wound as sharpened swords,
 And wide as targes let them be,
 With their shade to cover ye.

And if then the tyrants dare,
Let them ride among you there,
Slash, and stab, and maim, and hew,—
What they like, that let them do.

With folded arms and steady eyes,
And little fear, and less surprise,
Look upon them as they slay,
Till their rage has died away.

And that slaughter to the Nation
Shall steam up like inspiration,
Eloquent, oracular ;
A volcano heard afar.

When he had ended the reader turned to the listener. But the listener had understood little of the meaning, and less of the spirit of the poem. He hated the very shadow of opposition to the powers that be, on the part of any beneath his own standing and dignity ; and he scorned also the idea of submitting to persecution.

“What think you of that, sir ?” asked Donal.

“Sheer nonsense !” answered the minister.
“Where would Scotland be now, but for resistance ?”

“There’s more then one way of resisting, though,” returned Donal. “It seems to me that enduring evil without returning evil was the Saviour’s way. I don’t know about Scotland, but I fancy there would be more Christians, and of a better stamp, in the world if that had been the mode of resistance always adopted. Anyhow it was his way.”

“Shelley’s, you mean, I suppose !”

“I did not mean Shelley’s, though there it stands in his words at least ; I meant Christ’s. But in

spirit Shelley was nearer the truth than those who made him despise the very name of Christianity, without knowing what it was. 'Thank God, he will give every man fair play.'

"Young man!" said the minister, with an assumption of great solemnity and no small authority, "I am bound by my holy calling to tell you that you are in a state of rebellion against God, and he will not be mocked. Good-morning to you!"

"Would you kindly tell me, sir, before we part," said Donal, "if you know any place where I could get a night's lodging between this and Anchars?"

"Pardon me; I could not conscientiously send you where you would spread the seeds of your horrible infidelity."

"I must be somewhere, sir, and I would pay for my bed."

The minister answered with a backward wave of the hand. Donal, desiring no more of such uncongenial company, sat down on the roadside. He would let him get a good start of him—for his goal was in the same direction.

Donal was never in a hurry. This gave him in the eyes of such as did not understand him, a look of *sang froid* and indifference which was far from expressing him. He never would admit occasion for hurry, though often for promptitude. The teaching of his mother, still more from inward sympathy with her ways of thought, and from the evident and absolute correspondence of her behavior with her thought, patent to every one who knew her, had greatly helped him to take like her the words of our Lord as really meaning what they said, and as con-

cerning him more than any other things said or done, now or anytime, on the face of the earth: they were to him things he had no choice but obey. Having led a simple and clean life, in close contact with the powers and influences of nature, never having seen at home any contradiction between the thing spoken and the thing done, he had a better start in the journey of life than one in a million of young men with what is called a Christian education. He was mentally and bodily in a condition such as no common youth of our cities can form an idea of, much less believe in the existence of when presented to him. Such are the men who, coming down from time to time into the mephitic air of the so-called world, keep alive in it, by living it themselves, the knowledge of the truth which will at last save it. Those to whom at best it is but an invention for their own consolation of worthy, weak-minded men, will not hold the idea long in the company of such as Donal Grant.

That the earth was the Lord's and the fulness thereof, had been more present than ever to Donal as he walked his solitary way. And because it was the Lord's, he felt in heart and soul and brain that he possessed it too — after no private interpretation, but as one of the many children of the great Father. He had not even a place to work in, but was walking with him through his property to the spot where he meant him to stop and rest and sleep. It seems generally imagined a happily exceptional thing, a man to walk with God; while superiority to superstition smiles at the idea. But when we rest upon, and act from nothing but the truth of things, then and then only are we men, and need not be ashamed of being

creatures. Are these things for the pulpit, not for the novel? As the pulpit generally presents them, they are indeed unfit for the novel, unfit for the world, unfit for the human soul—miserable misrepresentations of the all-glorious. Men will go without being sent.

Donal took again his shabby little volume, and held more talk with the book-embodied spirit of Shelley. He saw more and more clearly how he was misled in his every notion of what Christianity in itself was—how different those who taught it to him must have been from the evangelists and apostles. He saw in the poet a boyish nature striving after liberty, with scarce a notion of what liberty really is. He did not know that it was to be found only in law—neither social, natural, nor moral law, but the law of liberty—oneness with the will and design which are our existence—these no arbitrary appointment, no invention of even the one who has the power to make, but the reproduction in increased degree of the same glorious necessities of existence as his own—the making of him in the very image of his maker. For the truth of God is the life of man.

When the clergyman was long out of sight he rose and went on, and soon came to a bridge by which he crossed the river. Many well-to-do farmhouses he passed, without inclination to seek of one of them shelter or refreshment. He carried his breakfast as well as his supper yet in his haversack, which his bag literally was, for it had little but oat-cake in it. Since his last settling with himself his spirits had scarcely flagged; when they did for a moment he had but to remind himself that his atmosphere did not affect the

celestial bodies. He was a pilgrim on his way to his divine fate — if only he might never do aught to delay its coming — never cause the wheels of the heavenly chariot to drive heavily.

The night began to descend, and he to look about him for some place of repose. But there was a long twilight before him yet, during which to choose. His feet alone were aching; they would have ached more, he said, if he had had shoes! It was a warm night, and would not be dark. Memory and hope joined sun to sun.

For some time the road had been ascending, and by and by Donal found himself on a bare moor, among heather not yet in bloom, and a forest of bracken. Here was a great beautiful bedroom for him! What better bedstead could he have than God's earth and God's heather! What better canopy than God's great, star-studded night, with its airy curtains of dusky darkness! It was in the same that Jacob had his vision of the mighty stair leading up to the gate of heaven! It was under such a roof that Jesus spent his last nights on the earth. For comfort and a sense of protection he did not go under a roof, but out into his father's house — out under his Father's heaven! The small and narrow gave him no feeling of safety, but the wide open. Thick walls shelter men from the enemies they fear; the Lord sought space, and there his Father. In such places the angels come and go more freely than where roofs nest faithlessness and distrust. If nowadays one hear a far-off rumor of an angel-visit, it is from some solitary plain where children are left alone. The angels find it harder work, I fancy, to do anything for us in

these days of sight and touch. Faith is the electric spark that leaps from earth to heaven, making the current between them complete. It goes now only in throbs and fits; no more in constant stream. Therefore we are miserable and moan, not even understand what is amiss with us.

The moor was table-land. Donal walked along its petty high level till he was weary, and rest looked blissful. Then he turned aside from the rough track into the thick heather and brake, searching as fastidiously as some do for the best hotel in a place. But when he came to a little hollow, dry as well as sheltered, with a great thick growth of his loved heather, its tops almost as close as the bed on which he used to sleep in his father's cottage, he sought no farther. Taking his knife, he cut a quantity of heather and ferns, and heaped it on the top of the thickest brush in the hollow; then creeping in between the cut and the growing, cleared the former from his face, that he might see the great worlds over him, and putting his knapsack under his head, fell fast asleep, and just as he fell asleep, thought he smelt the sea.

When he woke in the morning not even the shadow of a dream lingered to let him know that he had been dreaming. All seemed a blank. But he woke with such a clear mind, such an immediate uplifting of the soul towards heavenly places, that it seemed to him no less than to Jacob that he must have slept at the foot of the heavenly stairs. The wind came round him like the fit material of which to make new clean souls for the children of God. Every breath he drew seemed like God breathing afresh into his nostrils the breath of life. Who of the chemists knows what

the thing he calls oxygen is? They know about it, but it they do not know; just as a man may know a good deal about a man—yes, about *the Man*—and know himself not at all. The sun shone as if he were smiling at the self-importance of the sulky darkness he had driven away, and the world seemed content with its being—content with a heavenly content, no mere putting up with what could not be helped. So fresh was Donal's whole sense that he did not feel the same necessity for washing as when he slept in the house. It seemed as if his sleep within and the wind without had been washing him all the night, and being washed he needed not to be washed. So peaceful, so blissful was he, that his heart longed to share its bliss. But there was no one within sight, and he set out again on his journey.

He had not gone far when he came to a dip in the moorland, a round hollow with a cottage of turf in the middle of it, from whose chimney came a little smoke. There, too, the day was begun. He was glad he had not seen it before, for then he would have missed the glory of his night's rest. The face of the modest dwelling was turned towards him, and at the door of it stood a little girl in a blue frock. The moment she saw him she ran in, unused to the sight of a stranger. He went down and approached to knock at the door. But it stood wide open, and he could not help seeing in.

A man sat at the table in the middle of the floor, his forehead on his hand. Donal did not see his face, and his first thought was that he was waiting just as his father used sometimes to wait a moment for the Book, while his mother got it down from the

top of the wall. He stepped over the threshold, and in the simplicity of his uplifted heart, said :

“Ye’ll be gaein’ to hae worship. I wad fain j’in ye gien ye dinna objec’.”

“Na, na,” returned the man, raising his head, and taking a brief, hard stare at the applicant ; “we dinna set up for bein’ prayin’ fowk i’ this hoose. We lea’ that to them that kens what they hae to be thankfu’ for.”

“Ow, weel!” returned Donal, “I but thocht ye nicht hae been gaein’ to say gude mornin’ to yer makker, an’ wad hae likit to j’in in wi’ ye, for I kenna what I haena to be thankfu’ for. Guid mornin’ to ye.”

“Ye can bide an’ tak yer parritch gien ye like.”

“Ow, na. Ye nicht think I cam for the parritch an’ no for the prayers. No bein’ a hypocrite, I like as ill to be coontit ane as gien I war ane. Gude mornin’.”

“Ye can bide an’ hae worship wi’ ’s, gien ye like to tak the buik yersel’.”

“I canna lead whaur there’s nane to follow. Na, I’ll du better on the muir my lane.”

But the guidwife was a religious woman after her fashion—who can be after any one else’s?—She had been listening, and now appeared with the Bible in her hand, and without a word laid it on the table. Thus invited, Donal, who had never yet prayed aloud, except in a murmur by himself on the hill, felt that he could not refuse. He read a psalm of trouble, changing from a minor to a major key in the close. Then he spoke as follows :

“Freens, I’m but young, as ye see, an’ never afore

daurt open my moo i' sic fashion, but it comes to me speyk, an' wi' yer leave speyk I wull. I cudna help thinkin' when I saw the gudeman's face 'at he was i' some trible, siclik maybe, as King Dawvid was in whan he composed this same psalm I hae read i' yer hearin'. Ye observt hoo it began lik a stormy mornin', or ane raither whan clood an' mist's the maist o' the veesible warl'; but ye heard hoo it changed or a was dune. The sun comes oot bonny i' the en'; an' ye hear the birds beginnin' to sing, tellin' natur' to gie ower her greitin'. An' what brings the guid man til's senses div ye think? What but jist the thought o' Him 'at made him, 'at cares aboot him, him 'at maun come to ill himsel' afore he'll lat onything he made come to ill. Sirs, lat's gang doon upo' oor knees, and commit the keepin' o' oor sowls to him as til a faithfu' creator wha winna miss his pairt 'atween him and hiz."

They all went down on their knees, and Donal said, "O Lord, oor ain father an' saviour, the day ye hae sent's has arrived bonny an' gran', and we bless ye for sen'in' 't; but oh, oor father, we need mair the licht that shines 'i the dark place. We need the dawn o' a spiritual day inside's, or the bonny day ootside winna gang for muckle. Lord, oor micht, speyk a work o' peacefu' recall to ony dog o' thine 'at may be worryin' at the hert o' ony sheep o' thine 'at's run awa; but dinna ca' him back sae as to lea' the puir sheep ahint him; fess back dog and lamb thegither, O Lord. Haud's a' frae ill, an' guide's a' to gude, an' oor mornin' prayer's ower. Amen."

They rose from their knees, and sat silent for a moment. Then the gudewife put the pot on the fire

with the water for the porridge. But Donal rose, and walked out of the cottage and away, half-wondering at himself that he had dared as he had, yet feeling he had done but the most natural thing in the world.

“Hoo a body’s to win throuw the day wantin’ the Lord o’ the day an’ the hour an’ the minute is ayont me!” he said to himself, and hastened on his way.

Nor was the noon past when the blue line of the far ocean rose on the horizon.

CHAPTER II.

IN LODGINGS.

FROM the two or three incidents of his journey recorded, my readers may see something of the sort of man Donal now was — not very like most of the people they know, but not, therefore, the less worthy of being known, for though many are called — and come, too, in a way — few are chosen. The taste of the present age is to hear of the common kind, not the uncommon, but it shall not from me. The story of the chosen must be better worth telling than that of the merely called. Donal was very queer, some of my readers will think, and I admit it; for the man who regards the affairs of life from any other point than his own greedy self, must be queer indeed in the eyes of all slaves to their imagined necessities and unquestioned desires.

It was evening when he drew nigh the point to which he had directed his steps. It was a little country town, not very far from a famous seat of learning: there Donal would make inquiry before going farther. It was not so far from home as to make immediate return difficult, should anything happen to render his presence there desirable. Also the minister of his own parish knew the minister of the town, and had given him a letter of introduction to him. The country around had not a few dwellings of distinction in

it, and at some one or other of these there might be children in want of a tutor.

The sun was setting over the hills behind him as he entered the little town. At first it looked but like a village, for on the outskirts, through which the king's highway led, were but thatched cottages, with here and there a slated house of one story and an attic. Presently however began to appear houses of larger size, few of them of more than two stories, but most of them looking as if they had a long and not very happy history. All at once he found himself in a street, with quaint gables turned to it, gables with corbel steps, or, as they called them there, *corbie-steps*, with some occult allusion, perhaps, to the messenger sent out by Noah which never returned — in the minds of the children, places for the lazy bird to rest upon. There were one or two curious gateways with some attempts at decoration, and one house with two of those pepper-pots turrets which Scottish architecture has borrowed from the French chateau. The heart of the town consisted of a close built narrow street, with several short closes and wynds opening out of it — in all of them ancient-looking houses. In the whole place was not one shop-front, as it is called. There were shops not a few, but their windows were the windows of dwelling-houses, as they had all been when the wants of the inhabitants were fewer, and as their upper parts were now. Civilization brings desires, which grow to wants, then to imagined necessities, and so bring in weakness and artificiality. In those shops one could get as good a supply of the necessities of life as in any great town, and cheaper also. You could not get

a coat so well cut, nor a pair of shoes to fit you so tight without hurting as in some larger towns, but you would get first-rate work—better much than in many places of superior pretention. This was the town of Auchars—at least that is the name I choose to give it. The streets were roughly paved with round, waterworn stones, some so small that Donal was not sorry that he had not to walk far upon them.

The setting sun sent his shadow before him as he entered the place. He went in the middle of the street, looking on this side and that for the hostelry to which he had been directed as a place to put up at, and whither he had despatched his chest before leaving home. One gloomy building, apparently uninhabited, specially attracted his attention, for an involuntary thrill went through his spirit when his eyes first fell upon it. It consisted of three low stories, all their windows defended by iron stanchions. The door was studded with great knobs of iron, and looked as if it had not been opened for years. A little beyond, and just as the sun was disappearing behind him, he saw the sign he was in search of. It swung in front of an old-fashioned, dingy building, with much for its share of the old-world look that pervaded the place. The last red rays of the sun fell upon the sign, lighting up a sorely faded coat-of-arms. Its supporters, two red horses on their hind legs, were all of it that could be made out with ease. The crest above suggested a skate, but could hardly have been intended for one. They were the Morven arms. A greedy-eyed man stood in the doorway, with his hands in his trouser

pockets. He looked with contemptuous scrutiny at him of the bare feet approaching his trap. He had black hair and black eyes, and his nose looked as if a heavy finger had been set upon the top of its point, while it was yet in the condition of clay, and had pressed it downwards so that the nostrils swelled wide beyond their base; underneath was a big mouth with a good set of teeth, and a strong upturning chin. It was an ambitious and greedy face.

“A fine day, landlord!” said Donal.

“Ay,” answered the man, without changing the posture of one taking his ease against his own doorpost, or removing his hands from his pockets, but looking Donal up and down in the conscious superiority caused by the undoubted friendship of Mammion, and resting his eyes on his bare feet, and the trousers folded up to give free play to those laborious extremities, with a look befitting the indication they afforded of what was to be gained from their owner.

“This’ll be the Morven Arms, I’m thinkin’?” said Donal.

“It taksna muckle thought to think that,” returned the innkeeper, “whan there they hing—over ye heid there!”

“Ay,” said Donal, there’s something there—and it’s airms I doobtna; but it’s no a’body has the preevilege o’ a feenished eddication in heraldry like yersel’, lan’lord! I’m b’un’ to confess for what I ken they might be the airms o’ ony faimily o’ ten score.”

There was but one weapon with which John Glumm was assailable, and that was ridicule: with all his self-sufficiency he stood in terror of that and

the more covert the ridicule, so long as he suspected it, the more he resented as well as dreaded it. He stepped into the street, and taking a hand from a pocket, pointed up to his sign.

“See til’t!” he said. “Dinna ye see the twa reid horse?”

“Ay,” answered Donal. “I see them weel eneuch, but I’m nane the wiser nor gien they were twa reid whauls.—Man,” he went on, turning sharp round upon the fellow, “ye’re no cawpable o’ conceivin’ the extent o’ my ignorance! It’s as rampant as the reid horse upo’ your sign! I’ll yield to naebody i’ the amoont o’ things I dinna ken!”

The man stared at him for a moment.

“Is’ warran’,” he said, “ye ken mair nor ye care to-lat on!”

“And what may that be ower the heid o’ them for a crest?” asked Donal.

“It’s a base pearl-beset,” answered the landlord.

He had not a notion of what a *base* meant, nor yet *pearl-beset*, yet he prided himself on his knowledge of the words.

“Eh,” returned Donal. “I took it for a skate!”

“A skate,” repeated the landlord with offended sneer, and turned towards the house.

“I was thinkin’ to put up at yer hoose the nicht, gien ye could accommodate me at a rizzonable rate,” said Donal.

“I dinna ken,” rejoined John Glumm, hesitating, with his back to Donal, between unwillingness to lose a penny, and resentment at the supposed badinage, which was in Donal nothing but humorous good faith; “what wad ye ca’ rizzonable?”

“I wadna grutch a saxpence for my bed; a shillin’ I wad coont ower muckle,” answered Donal.

“Weel, ninepence than — for ye seemna owercome wi’ siller.”

“Na,” said Donal, “I’m no that; whatever my burden, yon’s no hit. The loss o’ what I hae wad hardly mak me lichter to rin the race set afore me!”

“Ye’re a queer customer!” said the man, without the ghost of an idea as to Donal’s meaning.

“I’m no sae queer,” rejoined Donal, “but I hae a kist comin’ by the carrier, direckit to the Morven Airms. It’ll be here in time, doobtless.”

“We’ll see whan it comes,” remarked the landlord, implying the chest was easier for Donal to mention than for the landlord to believe.”

“The warst o’ ’t is,” continued Donal, “that I canna weel shaw mysel’ wantin’ shune. I hae a pair i’ my kist — but that’s no o’ my feet.”

“There’s sutors anew i’ the toon to mak shune for a regiment,” said the innkeeper.

“It’s men’in,’ no makin’ I’m in want o’. — Whaur does yer minister bide. Whaur’s the manse, I mean?”

“No far, but he’s frae hame the noo; an’ forbye, he disna care about tramps. He winna waur muckle upo’ the likes o’ you.”

The landlord was recovering himself — therefore his insolence.

Donal gave a laugh. The thoroughly simple, those content to be what they are, have the less concern about what they seem. The ambitious, who like to be taken for more than they are, may well be annoyed when they are taken for less.

"I'm thinkin' ye wadna do muckle for a tramp aither!" he said.

"I wad not," answered Glumm. "It's the pairt o' an' honest man to discoontenance a' kin' o' lawlessness."

"Ye wadna hang the puir cratur, wad ye?" asked Donal.

"I wad hang a wheen mair o' them nor comes aft to the wuddie."

"Ye mean weel, dootless; but gien ye was ae day to be in want yersel'!"

"We'll bide till that day comes. But what are ye stan'in' there jawin' for? Do ye take me for a gype? Are ye comin' in, or are ye no?"

"It's a some cauld welcome ye offer me," said Donal. "It's true I'm tired, but Is' jist tak a link about afore I mak up my min'. A tramp, ye ken, canna stan' upo' ceremony!"

"He has to haud a ceevil tongue in's heid!" said Glumm.

Donal turned sharp round, but the man was already in the house, and in the act of disappearing down a passage. He turned away and walked further along the street.

He had not gone far before he came to a low-arched gateway in the middle of a poor-looking house. Within it, on one side, sat a little bowed man, cobbling diligently at a boot. The light of the west, where the sun had left behind him a heap of golden refuse and cuttings of rose and purple, shone right in at the archway, and enabled the little short-sighted man to go on after work-hours were naturally over. This was the very man Donal

needed! A *respectable* shoemaker would have disdained to patch up such a pair of shoes as he carried — especially as the owner had none on his feet. Ministry is not the rule of our *Christianity*. But here was one who doubtless would minister to his need!

“It’s a bonny nicht,” said Donal.

“Ye may weel say that, sir!” replied the cobbler, without looking up, for a somewhat critical stitch occupied him. “It’s a balmy nicht.”

“That’s raither a bonny word to put til’t!” returned Donal; “there’s a kin’ o’ an air about the place I wad hardly hae thocht balmy! But doot less that’s no the fau’t o’ the nicht!”

“Ye’re right there also,” returned the cobbler: and his use of the conjunction impressed Donal as indicating a tendency to continuity of thought. “But the weather has to do wi’ the smell — wi’ the mair or less o’ ’t, that is. It comes frae a tanneree no far frae here. But it’s no an ill smell to them ’at’s used til’t; an’ ye wad hardly believe me, sir, but I can smell the clover through ’t a’. Maybe I’m some preejudeeced i’ fawvour o’ the place, seein’ but for the tan-pits I couldna weel drive my trade: but sittin’ here frae mornin’ to nicht, I get a kin’ o’ a habit o’ luikin’ oot for my blessin’s. To recognize an ald blessin’ ’s ’maist better nor to get a new ane. A pair o’ shune weel cobblet ’s full better nor a pair o’ new anes.”

“Ay are they,” said Donal, “but I dinna jist see hoo yer seemile applies.”

“Isna gettin’ on a pair o’ auld weel-kent shoon, ’at winna nip yer feet nor lat in the watter, like com-

in' to ken a blessin' ye hae been haein' for months, maybe years, only ye didna ken 't for ane? It's a sudden glorification o' the auld shune."

As he said this, the cobbler lifted a little wizened face and a pair of twinkling eyes to those of the student, revealing a soul as original as his own. He was one of the inwardly inseparable, outwardly far divided company of Christian philosophers, among whom individuality as well as patience is free to work its perfect work—but a God-possessed individuality. In the moment of that glance Donal saw a ripe soul looking out of its tent door, all but ready to leap abroad in the sunshine of the new life. But the world would think not a straw more of a poor disciple if they saw the Lord sitting talking with him—nay if they heard their talk, for it would not be of the electric light, or of telephones of shares, or of the opening of new hunting-grounds for the manufacturers of the west; it would be only old-fashioned and superstitious, dealing with the roots of being and well-being. But what can money do to console a man with a headache?

Donal stood for a moment lost in a sort of eternal regard of the man, whom he seemed to have known for a few ages at least, when the cobbler looked up again.

"Ye'll be wantin' a job i' my line, I'm thinkin'." he said, with a kindly nod towards Donal's shoeless feet.

"There's sma' doot o' that," returned Donal. "I had scarce startit, but ower far frae hame to gang back, whan the sole o' ae shue cam aff, an I had to tramp it wi' nane but mine ain. But I fies them ou

wi' me, no fearin' to fa' in wi' ane o' your profession wha wad help me."

"An' Is' warran' ye thankit the Lord, whan the sole cam aff, 'at ye had been brought up wi' soles o' yer ain as teuch's ony leather, an' fit for wayfariin'!"

"To tell the truth," answered Donal, "I hae sae many things to be thankfu' for at it's but sma' won'er gien I forget some o' them. But ye're i' the richt, an' the Lord's name be praist 'at he gae me feet fit for gangin' upo'!"

Donal took his shoes from where they hung at his back, and untying the string that bound them presented the ailing one, with deference of one asking help, to the cobbler.

"That's what we may ca' deith!" remarked the cobbler as he regarded the sorely invalided shoe.

Donal caught his meaning.

"Ay, deith it is," he answered, "for it's a sair divorce o' sole an' body."

"It's a some auld farrand joke," said the cobbler, "but the fun intil a thing doesna weir oot ony mair nor the poetry or the trowth intil't"

Donal was charmed with his new acquaintance.

"Who would dare say there was no providence in the loss of my shoe-sole!" he remarked to himself. "Here I am in this unknown place with a friend already!"

The cobbler was submitting the shoes, first the sickly, then the comparatively sound one, to a thorough scrutiny.

"Ye dinna think them worth men'in, I doobt!" said Donal, with a touch of anxiety in his tone.

"I never thought that o' ony whaur the leather wad

haud the steik," replied the cobbler. "But whiles, I confess, I'm just a when tribled to ken hoo to chaarge for the wark. For it's no barely to be considered the time it'll tak' me to cloot them up, but whether the puir body's like to get eneuch oot o' them to mak' it worth their while to pey for a' my time waurt. I canna tak mair frae them nor it'll be worth to them. Ye see, the waur the shune, the mair time they tak' to mak' them worth onything ava'."

"But surely you ought to be paid in proportion to your labor."

"But i' that case I wad whiles hae to say til a puir body 'at hadna anither pair i' the worl', 'at that same bird-alane pair o' shune wasna worth men'in; an' that micht be a hertbrak, an' sair feet forby — to sic as wasna, like yersel', sir, born weel shod."

"But how will you make a living that way?" said Donal, delighted to hear him.

"Hoots the maister o' the trade 'ill see to my wauges."

"An' wha may that be?"

"He was never a cobbler himsel', but he was ance a vright (*carpenter*), an' noo he's liftit up to be the heid o' a' the trades, cobblers an' a'. An' there's ae thing he canna bide, an' that's parin' close."

He stopped, but Donal held his peace that he might go on, and he did go on.

"To them 'at mak's leist, for rizzons guid, by their neebour, he gies the best wauges whan they gang hame. Them 'at mak's a' 'at they can, he says til them, 'Ye helpit yersel' — help awa' — ye hae yer reward. Comena near me, for I canna bide ye.' — But about thae shune o' yours — I dinna weel ken.

They're weel eneuch worth duin' the best I can for them ; but the morn's Sunday, an' what hae ye to put on ?”

“Naething — till my kist comes, an' that I doobt winna be till Monday, or maybe the day efter.”

“An' ye winna be able to gang to the kirk wantin' shune ?”

“I'm no that partic'lar aboot gaein' to the kirk ; but think ye, gien I wantit to gang, or gien I thocht I was b'un' to gang, I wad bide at hame 'cause I had nae shune to gang in. Wad I ever tak it intil my heid the Lord wad be affrontit wi' the bare feet he made himsel' ! Eh, the bonny washin' he gae wi' 's ain bare han's to twal pair o' feet — an' ae pair o' them makin' haste to shed his blude.”

The cobbler caught up the worst shoe, and began upon it at once.

“Ye s' hae't, sir,” he said, “gien I sit a' nicht at it ! Ane 'll du till the Mononday. Ye s' hae't afore kirk-time, but ye maun come intil the hoose to get it, for the fowk wad be scunnert to see me workin' upo' the Sabbath day. They dinna un'erstan' 'at the maister works Sunday an' Setterday — an' his Father too !”

“You don't think, then, there would be anything wrong in mending a pair of shoes on the Sabbath-day ?”

“Wrang ! — in obeyin' my maister, whase is the day as weel's a' the days ? They wad fain tak it frae the Son o' Man, wha's the Lord o' 't, but they canna ! I hae that to learn yet ! An' raither nor learn that, I wad gang straucht to the ill place. Onything raither nor think less o' him whom my sowl loveth !”

And the cobbler looked up over the old shoe with eyes that flashed.

“But then — excuse me,” said Donal, “why should you not hold your face to it, and work openly in the name of your God? There’s something in me that cannot bear even the look of anything underhand.”

“Lang may it be sae wi’ ye, sir! But dinna ye min’ ’at we’re tellt naither to du oor gude works afore men to be seen o’ them, nor yet to cast oor perls afore swine. I coont cobblin’ your shoes, sir, a far better wark nor gaein’ to the kirk, an’ I wadna hae’t seen o’ men. Gien I war workin’ for fear o’ my ain stervin’, it wad be anither thing.”

This last was the first word he had said that Donal was not sure about. He thought perhaps the man’s love of logic and the force of custom together had misled him, but he could not think it over just then: and till he had done so, he dared not say a word on the other side. And surely this veteran of the faith must know best!

He learnt afterwards that the cobbler meant that the day having been given him to rest in, the next duty to helping another was to rest himself; to work for fear of starving would be to distrust the Father, and act as if man lived by bread alone.

“Whan I think o’ ’t,” the cobbler resumed after a pause, “bein’ Sunday I’ll bring them hame to ye whaur ye like, ’at ye mayna hae to appear comin’ for them as gien ye had stucken in a bog the nicht afore. Whaur wull ye be?”

“That’s what I wad fain hae ye tell me,” answered Donal. “I had thought to put up at the Morven Airms, but there was something I didna like about

the lan'lord. I wad learn frae yersel' some dacent, clean kin' o' a place whaur they wad gie me a bed in a room to mysel' and no seek mair nor I could weel pey them for their tribble."

"As ye spier, I'm free to answer; that wull my wife du for ye, gien ye can stan' the smell o' the leather."

"Hoots, what's that Naething. An' I'm mair obleeged to ye than I can tell," said Donal rejoiced.

'We hae a bit roomie," said the cobbler, "at the service o' ony dacent wayfarin' man that can put up wi' oor w'ys. An' for peyment, ye can pey what ye think it's worth to yersel'. We're never verra particular about the hoo muckle."

"I tak yer offer wi' thankfulness," said Donal.

"Weel, gang in at that door jist afore ye, an' ye'll see the gudewife; there's nae ither body till see. I wad gang wi' ye mysel', but ye see I canna wi' this shue o' yours to turn intil a Sunday ane! A kin' o' conversion, isna't noo?"

Simple hearts may best joke with sacred things; they are less likely to offend either God or another simple heart. Such alone will discriminate aright between the lawful and the unlawful in the matter.

Donal laughed and went to the door indicated. It stood wide open; for while the cobbler sat there at his work, his wife Eppie would never shut the door. He knocked instead of entering as the cobbler told him, for he looked into what seemed a dark cellar. There came no answer.

"She's some dull o' hearin'," said the cobbler, and called her by his pet name for her, in a voice no louder than he had used in speaking.

“Doory! Doory!” he said.

“She canna be that deaf gien she hears ye!” said Donal.

“When God gies you a wife, may she be ane to hear the lichtest word ye say whan she couldna hear anither cry!” said the cobbler.

Sure enough, he had scarcely finished the sentence, when Doory appeared at the door, with the words on her lips,

“Did ye cry, gudeman?”

“Na, Doory, I canna say I cried; but I spak, an’ ye, as is yer custom, hearkent till my word! Here’s a believin’ lad — I’m thinkin’ he maun be a gentleman, but I’m no sure — it’s hard for a cobbler to coont a man a gentleman ’at comes till him wantin’ shune — but he maybe for a’ that, an’ there’s nae hurry to ken. He’s welcome to me, gien he be welcome to you, an’ ye can gie him a nicht’s lodgin’.”

“I’ll du that, wi’ a’ my hert!” said Doory; “he’s welcome to what we hae.”

Therewith turning, she led the way into the house.

While she and her husband spoke together, Donal saw her well. She was a very small, spare woman, in a blue print, with little white spots — straight, not bowed like her husband. This seemed at first sight the only thing in which she was not like him. But before the evening was over, Donal had come to see there was not a feature of the one face like that of the other, and was greatly puzzled to understand how the two expressions came to be so like; it was as if in them the inner had gained so complete a victory over the outer, that it revealed itself at once, compelling its aid, and crushing its opposition, and so being

alike they looked alike. As they sat together there, it seemed in the silences as if they were the same person thinking in two different places. Every now and then, now the one, then the other would say,—“Weel, that’s jist what I was thinkin’!” or, “Weel, I was jist gaein’ to remark that same!” or, “Ye jist tak’ the word oot o’ my verra moo’!”

When Donal again reached the door, following the old woman, he saw her go up a stair somewhere in a corner of the darkness, and he went to it, and ascended after her. It was steep and narrow, and the steps high, so that a few of them brought him to a landing where the light broke upon him. The first thing he saw was green leaves, partially shutting it out from a window in the little passage by which they approached a door. Through that he saw what seemed to him a most enticing room—homely enough, but luxurious compared to what he had been accustomed to in his father’s shepherd-cot on the hill-side. There was plenty of light in it, but it was not therefore without its interest of dark corners. He saw a brown-hued but clean scoured and clean-swept wooden floor, on which shone a keen-eyed little fire from a grate, small and low. Two easy chairs covered with some kind of party-colored stripped stuff, stood one on each side of it. A kettle was singing on the hob. The white deal table was set out with a humble tea equipage—a fat brown teapot, with cups of a gorgeous pattern in bronze that shone in the fire light like red gold. In a corner was a box-bed.

In the middle of the floor the woman turned to Donal, and said,

‘I’ll jist lat ye see what accommodation we hae at

yer service, sir, an' gich that'll shuit ye, ye sall be welcome."

So saying, she opened a door at the side of the fireplace, which, instead of being that of a cupboard, as one might have expected, discovered a neat little parlor, with a sweet air in it. The floor was only sanded, and so much the cleaner than if it had been carpeted. A small mahogany table, black with age, stood in the middle of it. On a side table, covered with a cloth of faded green, lay a large family Bible, in front of a tea-caddy and a few books. In the side of the wall opposite the window, was again a box-bed. To the eyes of the shepherd-born lad, it looked the most desirable place he had ever seen for earthly tent. He turned to his hostess and said,

"I'm feart it's ower gude for me. What could ye lat me hae't for, for a week? I hae naething to dae, an' I'm o' the ootluik for wark. I wad fain bide wi' ye gien I could, but whaur or whan I may get employment, I canna tell; sae I maunna tak' it for mair nor a week."

"Mak yersel' at ease aboot that till the morn be by," said the old woman. "Ye canna du naething till that be ower. Upo' the Mononday mornin' we s' haud a cooncil thegither — you an' me an' my man. I can du naething wantin' my man; we aye pu' thegither or no at a'."

Well content, and with hearty thanks, Donal committed his present fate into the hands of the humble pair, whom he regarded as his heaven-appointed helpers. After a good washing and brushing, which was all that was possible to him in the way of dressing, he reappeared in the kitchen. There tea was by

this time ready, and the cobbler, who had ceased working, till after the meal, was seated in the window with a book before him, leaving for Donal the easy chair next it, in which he insisted on his sitting.

“I canna tak yer ain cheir frae ye,” said Donal.

“Hoots!” returned the cobbler, “what’s onything oors for, but to gie the neeper ’at stan’s i’ want o’ ’t.”

“But ye hae had a sair day’s wark.”

“An’ you a sair day’s traivel.”

“But I’m young!”

“An’ I’m auld, an’ my labor the nearer ower.”

“But I’m strong.”

“There’s nae the less need ye sud be hauden sae. Sit ye doon, an’ waste na the strauchtness o’ yer back. Ye see my business is to tak care o’ the boadies o’ men an’ specially o’ their puir feet ’at has to bide the weicht o’ a’ the lave o’ them, an’ get sair pressed thegither i’ the endeavour — no to mention the cair-ryin’ o’ them frae place to place. Ay, life’s as hard upo’ the feet o’ a man as upo’ ony pairt o’ ’m! An’ whan the feet gae wrang, there’s nae muckle mair to be dune till they be set richt again. I’m sair hon-our, I say to mysel’ whiles, to be set over the feet o’ men, to luik efter them what I can, an’ du weel for them. It’s a fine ministration! — full better than bein’ a door-keeper i’ the hoose o’ the Lord. For it’s no to keep a door, but to keep the feet ’at gang oot an’ in at that door!”

“Here’s a man!” said Donal to himself. “There’s mair i’ the warl’ like my ain father an’ mither! An’ whaur’s the won’er? It’s ae Lord, ae faith, ae bap-tism.”

“Thus adjured, he could no longer decline the seat

appointed him. And so he sat silent and sleepy for a few minutes.

"Come to the table, Anerew," said the old woman, "gien ye can pairt wi' that buik o' yours, an, lat yer sowl gie place to yer boady at it's proper sisson. Sir," she went on turning to Donal, "I maist believe the business o' *my* life is to haud my man alive. I doobt gien he wad ait or drink gien I wasna at his elbuek."

"Weel, Doory," returned her husband, "I'm sure I gie ye a bit o' mine, ilka noo an' than, whan I come upo' onything by ord'nar' tasty!"

"That ye du, Anerew, or I dinna ken what wad come o' *my* sowl ony mair nor o' *your* boady.—Sae ye see, sir, we're like John Sprat an' his wife — ye'll ken the bairns say about them?"

"Ay, fine that," replied Donal. "An' it seems to me ye couldna weel be better fittit."

"God grant it!" said the old woman. "But we wad fit better yet gien I had a wheen mair brains."

"The Lord kens best, wha brought ye thegither," said Donal.

"Ye never uttert a truer word," said the cobbler. "Gien the Lord be content wi' the brains he's gien ye, an' I be content wi' the brains ye gie me, what richt hae ye to be discontit, Doory? But I s' come to the table.—Wad ye alloo me to be speir efter yer name, sir?"

"My name's Donal Grant," replied Donal.

"I thank ye, sir, an' I'll haud it in respec'," returned the cobbler. "Maister Grant, wull ye ask a blessin'?"

"I wad rather j'in i' your askin'," replied Donal.

The cobbler said a little prayer, and they began to

eat — first of oat-cakes, baked by the old woman, and butter, then of loaf bread as they called it.

“ I’m sorry I hae nae jeally or jam to set afore ye, sir, but we’re but simple fowk, ye see, no luikin’ to muckle mair nor jist to haud oor earthly taibernacles in a haibitable condition till we hae notice to quit.”

“ It’s a fine thing to ken,” said the cobbler, with a queer look, “ ‘at whan ye lea’ ’t, yer hoose fa’s doon, and ye haena to think o’ ony damages to pay — forby ’at gien ’t lestit ony time efter ye was’ gane frae ’t, there would be a when devils strivin’ wha was to bide intil ’t.”

“ Hoot, Anerew,” interposed his wife, “ what richt hae ye to say that? There’s naething like that i’ the scriptur’.”

“ Hoots, gudewife,” returned the husband, “ what ken ye about what’s no i’ the scriptur’? Ye ken a heap, I alloo, about what’s *in* scriptur’, but ye ken unco little about what’s no intil’t!”

“ Weel, isna that the best to ken? ”

“ Ayont a doobt.”

“ Weel! ” returned his wife with playful triumph.

Donal saw that he had got hold — not of one, but of a pair of originals; and that was a joy to the heart of one who was an original in the best sense himself — namely one that lived close to the simplicities of existence.

Andrew Comin would never have asked any one before offering him house-room, but once his guest he would have thought it an equal lapse in breeding not to show the interest in him he felt, and ask for some communication about himself. So, by and by, after a little more talk, so far removed from the common-

place that the commonplace mind would have found it only mirth-provoking, while the angels would probably be listening to it with a smile such as we give to a child wiser than ourselves, the cobbler said:

“An’ what pairt may ye hae yersel’, sir, i’ the ministry o’ the temple?”

“I think I un’erstan’ ye,” replied Donal; “my mother says curious things just like you.”

“Curious things is whiles curius only ’cause we’re no used to them,” remarked Andrew.

A pause following he resumed.

“Gien there be onything wad mak ye prefar waitin’ till ye ken Doory an’ me a bit better, sir,” he said, “jist coont my ill-mainnert question no speirt.”

“There’s nae sic thing,” answered Donal. “I’ll tell ye onything or a’thing about mysel’—’cep’ ae thing an’ that’s no a sin.”

“Tell what ye wull, sir, an keep what ye wull; yer knowledge is yer ain,” said the cobbler.

“Weel,” said Donal, “I was brought up a herd-laddie, an’ whiles a shepard-ane. For mony a year I kent mair about the hill-side nor the inglencuk. But it’s the same God an’ Father upo’ the hill-side or i’ the ley, an i’ the pailace o’ the king—sic a king as passes on the praise to him to whom it’s due.”

“Eh, but I’m glaid to hear ye ken a’ about the win’, an’ the clouds, an’ the w’ys o’ God oot o’ the hoose. I ken something about hoo he hauds things gaein’ inside the hoose—in a body’s hert, I mean—in mine an’ Doory’s there; but I ken little about the w’y he gars things work ’at lie’s no sae for ben in.”

“Div ye think, then, ’at God disna fill a’thing?” said Donal. “Surely no!”

“Na, na, I ken better nor that,” answered the cobbler: “but ye maun aloo a tod’s hole’s no sae deep as the thro’t o’ a burnin’ m’untain! God himsel’ canna win sae far ben in a shallow place as in a deep place; sae he canna be sae far ben i’ the win’s, though he gars them du as he likes, as he is or sud be i’ your hert an’ mine, sir.”

“I un’erstan’,” responded Donal. “Could that hae been hoo the Lord had to rebuke the win’s an’ the wawves, as gien they had been gaein’ at their ain free wull, i’stead o’ the wull o’ him ’at made them, an’ set them gaein’?”

“Maybe, but I wad need to think aboot that afore I answert,” replied the cobbler.

A silence intervened. Then said the cobbler, thoughtfully,

“But yer no a shepherd noo! I thought, whan I saw ye, ye was maybe a lad frae a shop i’ the muckle toon, or a clerk, as they ca’ them, ’at sits frae morning to nicht makin’ up accoonts.”

“Na — I’m no that, I thank God,” said Donal.

“What for thank ye God for that?” asked Andrew. “A’ place is his. I wadna hae ye thank God ye’re no a cobbler like me! Ye micht, for it’s little ye ken the guid o’ ’t!”

“I’ll tell ye what I mean, interrupted Donal. “I think mine maun be the mair excellent w’y. I ken weel the fowk o’ the toons thinks’t a heap better to deal wi’ deid figures nor wi’ live sheep; but I’m no o’ their min’. I could weel fancy an angel a shepherd noo, an’ he wad coont my father guide company. Troth, he wad want wings an’ airms an’ feet an’ a’ to luik efter the lambs whiles. But gien he was a clerk

in a coontin' hoose, he wad hae to stow awa the wings; I *cannot* see what use he wad hae for them there. He might be an angel all the time, an' that no a fallen ane, but he bude to lay aside something to mak him fit the place."

"But ye're no a shepherd the noo," said the cobbler.

"Na," replied Donal — "cep' I be set to luik efter anither grade o' lamb. A kin' freen'—ye may hae h'ard his name — Sir Gilbert Galbraith — made the beginnin' o' a scholar o' me. I'm Maister o' Airts o' the auld University o' Inverdaur."

"I thought as muckle!" cried Mistress Comin in triumph. "I hadna time to say it to ye, Anerew, but I was sure he cam frae the college, an' had but ae pair o' shune 'cause he had to lea the wark for the learnin'."

"I hae anither pair i' my kist, though — whan that comes," said Donal, laughing.

"I'm glaid to hear't," she returned. "I only houp the kist winna be ower muckle to win up oor stair!"

"Ow, na! I dinna think it. But we'll lea 't i' the street afore that s' come 'atween 's!" said Donal. "Gien ye'll hae me, sae lang's I'm i' the toon, I s' gang nae ither gait."

"An' ye'll be able doobtless to read the Greek jist like yer mither-tongue?" said the cobbler, with a long-ing admiration in his tone.

"Na, no like that; but weel eneuch to get some gude o' it."

"Weel, that's jist the ae thing I grutch ye — na, no grutch — I'm glaid ye hae't; but the ae thing I wad fain hae been a scholar for mysel'! To think 'at I

ken no ane o' the soons i' the which the word was spoken by the Word himsel'!"

"But ye ken the letter o' the word he made little o' comparat wi' the speerit!" said Donal.

"Ay, that's true! and yet it's whaur a man may weel be greedy, an' want to hae a' thing; whan he has the spirit, he wad fain hae the letter tu! but it disna maitter; I s' set to learnin' 't the first thing when I gang up the stair — that is, gien it be the Lord's will."

"Hoots!" said his wife, "what wad ye du wi' Greek up there! I s' warran' the fowk there, ay, an' the maister himsel', speyks guid honest Scotch! What for no! What wad they du there wi' Greek, 'at a body wad hae to warstle wi' frae mornin' to nicht, an' no mak oot the half o' 't!"

Her husband laughed merrily, but Donal said,

"'Deed, maybe ye're no sae far wrang, gude-wife! I'm thinkin' there'll be a kin' o' a gran'-mither tongue there, 'at 'll soop up a' the lave, an' be better to un'erstan' nor a body's ain mither-tongue — for it'll be yet mair his ain nor that."

"Hear til him!" said the cobbler with thorough approbation.

Donal went on.

"Ye ken," he said, "'at a' the languages o' the earth cam, or luik as gien they had come, frae ane, though we're no jist dogsure o' that. There's my mither's ain Gaelic, for enstance; it's as auld, maybe aulder nor the Greek; onygait, it has mair Greek nor Latin words intil 't — an' ye ken the Greek's an aulder tongue nor the Laitin. Weel, gien we could work oor w'y back to the auldest grit-gran'-mother-tongue o' a', I'm thinkin' it wad come a kin o' sae easy til 's

'at, wi' the impruvt faculties o' oor h'avenly condition, we micht be able in a feow days to communicate wi' ane anither i' that same, ohn stammert or hummt an' hawt."

"But there's been sic a heap o' things f'un' oot sin' syne i' the min' o' man, as weel's i' the warl' outside," said Andrew, "that sic a language wad be mair like a bairn's tongue, I'm thinkin', nor a mither's, whan set against a' 'at we wad hae to speyk about!"

"Ye're verra richt there, I dinna doobt. But ance a' body startit frae the same p'int, ye see hoo easy it wad be for ilk ane to bring in the new word he wantit, haein' eneuch common afore to explain 't wi'; an' sae or lang, the language wad hae intil 't ilka word 'at was worth haein' in ony language 'at ever was spoken sin' the toor o' Babel wad grow nae mair."

"Eh, sirs, but it's dreidfu' to think o' haein' to learn a' that!" said the old woman. "I'm ower auld an' dottlet."

Her husband laughed.

"I dinna see what ye hae to laugh at!" she returned, laughing too; "ye'll be dottlet yersel' gien ye leeve lang eneuch!"

"I'm thinkin'," said Andrew, "but I dinna ken, 'at it maun be a man's ain faut gien age maks him dottlet for gien he's aye been haudin' by the trowth, I dinna think he'll fin' the trowth hasna hauden by him. But I was lauchin' at the thought o' onybody bein' auld up there. We'll a' be yoong there, lass."

"It sall be as the Lord wills," returned his wife.

Her husband responded with a clear, almost merry,

"Sae be't lass! we want nae mair, nor nae less. Better there canna be."

So the evening wore away. The talk was to the very mind of Donal, who never loved wisdom herself so much as when she appeared in her peasant-garb. That that should seem to him the fittest for her was natural, seeing he had first recognized her in that garb; for it was in the form of his mother that Wisdom had made herself known to him.

After one of those moments of silence that not unfrequently intervened, Mistress Comin was the first to speak.

"I won'er," she said, "at yoong Eppie's no puttin' in her appearance! I was sure o' her the nicht; she hasna been near's a' the week!"

The cobbler turned to Donal to explain. He would not talk of things their guest did not understand; it would be like shutting him out after taking him in!

"That's a gran'child o' oors, sir — the only ane we hae. She's a weel-behaved lass, though no sae muckle ta'en up wi' the things o' the upper warl' as her grannie an' me cud wuss. She's in a place no far frae here — no an easy ane, maybe, to gie satisfaction'in, but she's duin' no that ill."

"Hoot, Anerew! ye ken she's duin' jist as weel as ony lassie o' her years could in ony justice be expectit to do," interposed the grandmother. "It's seldom the Lord 'at sets an auld heid upo' yoong shooters."

The words were hardly spoken when a light foot was heard coming up the stair.

"Here comes the lass to answer for hersel'!" added the grandmother joyously.

The door of the room opened, and a good-looking girl of about eighteen came in. She looked shy when she saw a stranger present.

“Weel, yoong Eppy, hoo’s a’ wi’ ye?” said the old man.

The grandmother’s name was Elspeth, and the grand-daughter’s being the same, had therefore always the prefix.

“Brawly, thank ye, gran’father,” she answered.

“Hoo are ye yersel’?”

“Ow, weel cobbled!” he replied.

“Sit ye doon,” said the grandmother, “by the spark o’ fire, for the nicht’s some airy like.”

“Na, grannie, I want nae fire,” said the girl. “I hae run a’ the ro’d jist to get a glimp’ o’ ye afore the week was oot. For I haena been able afore.”

“Hoo are things gaein’ wi’ ye up at the castle?”

“Ow, sic-like’s usual — only the hoosekeeper’s been some dowry, an’ that puts mair upo’ the lave o’ ’s; for whan she’s weel she’s no ane to spare hersel’—or ither fowk aither. I wadna care gien she wad but lippen til a body.”

This was said with a toss of the head.

“We mauna speyk evil o’ dignities, yoong Eppie!” said the cobbler, with a twinkle in his eye.

“Ca’ ye Mistress Brooks a dignity, gran’father?” said the girl with a laugh that was nowise rude.

“I du that,” he answered. “Isna she ower you? An’ haena ye to du as she tells ye? ’Atween her an’ you that’s eneuch to justifee the word.”

“I winna dispute it. But, eh, it’s a queer kin’ o’ a family yon!”

“Tak’ care, yoong Eppie! We maun haud oor tongues aboot things committit til our trust; ane paid to serve in a hoose maun tre’t the affairs o’ that hoose no as gien they war their ain to do as they likit wi’.”

“ Deed, it wad be weel gien a’body about the hoose was as particular as ye wad hae me, gran’father! But things *are* said, wi’ mair or less rizzon, ’at wad be better left alane!”

“ Hoo’s my lord, lass?”

“ Ow, muckle the same — aye up the stair an’ doon the stair a’ the forepairt o’ the nicht, an’ maist aye inveesible a’ the day lang — ’cep it be to Miss Particular hersel’.”

“ Noo, nae names, I beg!” said the cobbler, and this time he spoke quite seriously. “ I winna hae’t. I canna bide them. Like sweirin’, they come o’ nae guid. Ca’ a body by the name they war ca’d afore the face o’ him ’at ca’s them by ane o’ his ain. This yoong lass,” he continued, turning to Donal, “ has a w’y o’ giein’ fowk names out o’ her ain hied, as gien she was Adam when the beasts war broucht til him. But gien onybody has onything to ca’ his ain, surely it’s the name gi’en him to honour or disgrace!”

Donal said nothing. The girl cast a shy glance at him, as if she knew he was on her side against the older people, who yet must be humored. Donal was not too simple to understand her, and therefore gave the look no reception; he was far more in *rapport* with the old people than with her, and was besides a true man and their guest, who not even by a passing look would be false to them. He saw in the presence of the girl a very different breed from that of her grandparents — a powerful admixture of the worldly element — perhaps more than their partiality allowed them to see; bethinking himself, however, that they might have private matters to talk about, he rose and turning to his hostess, said:

“Wi’ yer leave, gudewife, I wad gang to my bed, for I hae traivelt a maitter o’ thirty miles the day, I fancy, upo’ my bare feet.”

“Eh, sir!” she answered; “I oucht to hae considert that! — Come, young Eppy, we maun get the gentleman’s bed ready for him.”

With another toss of her pretty head, Eppy followed her grandmother to the next room, casting a glance behind her that seemed to ask what the old woman meant by calling a lad without shoes or stockings a gentleman. Not the less readily or actively, however, did she on that account assist her grandmother in preparing the tired wayfarer’s couch. He was to her but another added to the many odd characters to whom the cobbler and his wife were famed and ridiculed for giving shelter. In a very few minutes they returned, and the grandmother told him that the room was quite ready, adding a hope that he would sleep as sound as if his own mother had made the bed.

He heard them go on talking for a little while after the door was closed between him and them. Then the girl rose and took her leave. Donal was just falling asleep in the luxury of consciously resting weariness, when the sound of the cobbler’s hammer for a moment roused him, and he knew that the old man was again at work on his behalf. A moment more and he was fast asleep.

CHAPTER III.

THE SABBATH.

NOTWITHSTANDING his weariness he woke early, for he had slept as not often in his later years. Study is not so favourable to sleep as out-of-door labor. He rose and dressed himself, drew aside the little muslin curtain that shrouded the window, and looked out. It was a lovely morning. His prospect was the curious old main street of the town, the sunlight the only sign of life in it. The sun that had shone him into the town, was now shining into it from the other side, but not a single living creature cast a shadow upon the rough paving stones! Yes; there was a cat shooting across it like the culprit he probably was! Would there be a garden to the house? He would like to read a little in the fresh morning air!

He stole softly through the outer room, where the old couple slept, and down the stair; found the back-door and a water but, beyond, a garden consisting of two or three plots of flowers, carefully kept, and promising well; also a seat, surrounded and almost canopied with honeysuckle, where doubtless the cobbler would sometimes smoke his pipe! Why did he not work there rather than in the arch-way? thought Donal — but concluded that he was more in

the way of decrepit soles sitting where he had found him—his own constant advertisement. But the truth was that, much as he loved flowers and light and the free air of the garden, the old cobbler loved the faces of his kind most of all. His prayer for forty years had been to have his soul made like the soul of his master; and except it was answered, how was it that, every year, I might say every month he lived, he found himself loving the very faces of his fellows more. Instead of interfering with his contemplations, the passers by gave him the more things to think about—only sometimes sorely puzzling him as to how it was that this or that face raised in him these or those thoughts, perhaps to himself new. Were these faces, he asked, the types of a celestial language in which God talked to him?

Donal sat down and took his Greek Testament from his pocket; but ere he opened it, brilliantly as the sun was shining, full of the resurrection of a greater sun, all at once it seemed as if the light went out of his life, for the vision came back of the stone quarry and the girl turning from him in the wan moonlight. But swift as thought followed the vision of the women weeping about the forsaken tomb; and with the thought of his risen Lord he seemed to rise also— he could not have said how— up into a region far “above the smoke and stir of this dim spot,” a region where life was good even with its sorrow, for there was he who loved and suffered as no man else could, and yet was at peace. And he perceived afresh that the man who is able to look down and see that part of him capable of disappointment lying beneath him is far more blessed than he who rejoices in the fulfil-

ment of his desires. Then prayer awoke, and in the sweet light of that morning of peace he drew near to the living one, and knew him as the source of his being. Weary then with blessedness he leaned back against the shadowing honeysuckle, gave a great sigh, smiled, wiped his eye, and was ready for the day and whatever it might bring. But the peaceful bliss continued yet, and for a while he sat in the conscious annihilation of life in higher life, when by degrees he became aware of the muffled sounds of the cobbler again at his work upon his disabled shoe.

“Here is a true man!” thought Donal — “a God-like helper of his fellow!”

The hammer ceased, for now the cobbler was stitching. Donal sat yet awhile, feeling rather than thinking — how long he did not know; when, just after another little roll of the cobbler’s drum giving glory to God by doing His will — for the sweetest and most acceptable music is that which rises from work a doing, the incense thereof rises as from the river in its flowing, from the wind in its blowing, from the grass in its growing — he began to hear the voices of two women in the next garden close behind him, talking together.

“Eh,” said one, “there’s that godless cratur, An’rew Comin, at his wark again upo’ the Sawbath mornin’!”

“Ay, lass,” answered the other, “I hear him! Eh, but it ’ll be an ill day for him when he has to appear afore the jeedge o’ all. *He* winna hae his comman’ments broken that gait!”

“Troth, na!” returned the other; “it ’il be a sair sattlin day for *him*!”

Donal rose, and looking about him, saw two decent, well dressed, elderly women on the other side of the low stone wall. He was approaching them with the request on his lips to know which of the Lord's commandments they supposed the cobbler to be breaking, when, seeing that he must have overheard them, they turned their backs and walked away. But they left with Donal the idea that the *Sabbath*, as, borrowing the Jewish name for our Saturday, they called the Lord's day, was simply one of the Scotch idols they were always falling down and worshipping—as an idol ought to be worshipped.

At length his hostess, having discovered that he was in the garden came out to call him to breakfast—the simplest of meals—oatmeal porridge with a cup of tea after it, because it was Sunday, and there was danger of sleepiness at the kirk.

“Yer shune's waitin' ye, sir,” said the cobbler. “Ye'll fin' them a better job nor ye expectit. They're a better job onygait nor I expectit mysel'.”

Donal made haste to put them on, and felt dressed for the Sunday—as he might well do who had worn none since the Friday.

“Are ye gaein' to the kirk the day, Anerew?” asked the old woman, adding, as she turned to their guest—“My man's some particlar aboot gaein' to the kirk! Some days he'll gang three times, an' some days he winna gang ance! He kens himsel' what for,” she added with a smile, whose sweetness confessed it to her the best possible reason in the world.

“Ay, I'm gaein' the day. I want to gang wi' our veesitor,” he answered.

“I’ll tak’ him gien ye dinna care to gang,” rejoined his wife.

“Ow, I’ll gang!” he insisted. “It’ll gie’s something to talk about, an’ sae we’ll ken ane anither better yet; an’ what’s a greater maitter, we’ll maybe come a bit nearer to ane anither; an’ what’s best o’ a’, maybe that gait a bit nearer to the maister himsel’. For that same’s the ae en’ o’ life. That’s what we’re here for — comin’ an’ gaein’.”

“As ye please, Anerew! What’s richt to you’s aye richt to me; though I wad o’ my ain sel’ be doobtfu’ gien’t was a richt rizzon for gaein’ to the kirk — to hae something to speyk about.”

“It’s a gude rizzon whaur ye haena a better, sure,” he answered. “It’s aften I get at the kirk naething but what angers me — it’s sic awfu’ lees again my Lord an’ my God. But whan there’s ane to talk it ower wi’, ane ’at has some care for God as weel’s for himsel’, there’s some gude sure to come oot o’ ’t syne — some revelation o’ the real richteousness, no what fowk ’at gangs by the ministers ca’s richteousness. — Is yer shune comfortable to yer feet, sir?”

“Ay, that they are! an’ I thank ye. They’re full better nor new.”

“Weel, we winna hae worship this mornin’, for whan wē gang to the kirk it’s like aitin’ mair ner’s guid for ye.”

“Hoots, Anerew! ye dinna think a body can hae ower muckle o’ the word?” said his wife, anxious as to the impression he might make on Donal.

“Ow na gien they tak’ it in an’ disgest it. But it’s no a bonny thing to hae the word sticken’ about yer moo’ an baggin oot yer pooches, no to say lyin’ cauld

upo' yer stamack, whan it's for the life o' men. The less yet tak abune what ye put in practice the better; an' gien it be o' a kin 'at has nae thing to do wi' practice, the less ye pay heed til't the better. Gien ye hae dune yer brakfast, sir, we'll gang — no 'at it's freely kirk-time yet, but the Sabbath's maist the only day I get a bit o' a walk, an' gien ye hae nae objection til a turn about the Lord's muckle hoose afore we gane intil his little ane — we ca't his, but I doobt it's but a bairn's doll-house — I'll be ready in a meenute."

Donal willingly agreed, and the cobbler, already partly clothed in his Sunday-best, in a pair of corduroy trousers of a mouse color, namely, having put on an ancient tail-coat of blue with gilt buttons, they set out together. I will not give their conversation. It was just the same as it would have been any other day. Where every day is not the Lord's, the Sunday is his least of all. There may be sickening unreality where there is no conscious hypocrisy.

They left the town, and were soon walking in meadows through which ran a clear little river, shining and speedy in the morning sun. Its grassy banks were largely used for bleaching and the long lines of white in the lovely green of the natural grass, not so plentiful in Scotland as in England, were pleasant both to eye and mind. All about, the rooks were feeding in peace, knowing their freedom that day from the persecution to which, like all other doers of good in creation and for redemption they are in general exposed. Beyond the stream lay a level plain, stretching toward the sea, divided into numberless fields, and dotted with farmhouses and hamlets, but on the side where the friends were walking, the

ground was more broken, rising in many places into small hills, many of them wooded. About half a mile away was one of a conical shape, on whose top towered a castle yet perfect and strong. Old and gray and sullen, it lifted itself from the foliage that surrounded it like a great rock from a summer sea against the clear blue sky of the June morning. The whole hill was covered with wood, mostly rather young, but at the bottom were some ancient firs and beeches. At the top, round the base of the castle the trees were mostly delicate birches, with moonlight skin, and feathery larches, not thriving over well.

“What do they call the castle?” questioned Donal.
“It must be a place of some importance.”

“They maistly ca’ ’t jist the auld castel,” answered the cobbler; “but its auld name — they ca’ ’t Castel Graham noo — its auld name is Graham’s Grip. It’s Lord Morven’s place; the faimily-name’s Graham, ye ken. Noo, they ca’ themsel’s Graeme-Graham — jist twa w’ys o’ spellin’ the same name. The present lord, wha wasna upo’ the main brainch, they tell me, spelt his name wi’ the dipthong, an’ wasna willin’ to gie’t up a’thegither for the H — sae pat the twa thegither. That’s whaur yoong Eppy’s at service. An’ that min’s me, sir, ye haena tellt me yet what kin o’ a place ye wad hae yersel’. It’s no ’at a puir body like me has ony enfluence, as ye may suppose, but it’s aye weel to lat fowk ken what ye’re efter. A word gangs speirin’ lang efter it’s oot o’ sicht — an’ its answer may come back frae far. The Lord whiles brings about things i’ the maist oonlikely fashion.”

“I’m ready for anything I’m fit to do,” said Donal

“but I have had what’s called a good education— though in truth I think I have learned more from a sore heart than from any book— and so I would rather till the human than the earthly soil, for I take more interest in the schoolmaster’s crops than in the farmer’s. I can manage boys, and make a little thrashing go a long way. I taught a good deal while I was at college.”

“Wad ye hae ony objection to un’ertak the tuition o’ ae scholar by himsel’— or say twa maybe?”

“None, if I thought myself fit for the task? I had that same in my eye when I turned in this direction. Do you know of any such situation to be had?”

“Na, I canna say that; but there can be no hairm in mentionin’ what yoong Eppy tellt her gran’mither last nicht—’at there was a word about the place o’ gettin’ a tutor for the young ane. His sister’s been duin’ her best wi’ ’im up to this present, but they say he’s come to be needin’ mair discipline nor she can weel gie ’im. I kenna hoo that may be. Hae ye ony means o’ makin’ an approach to the place?”

“Not until the minister comes home,” answered Donal. “I have a letter to him. Do you think it will be long before he comes?”

“He’ll be hame i’ the middle o’ the week, I hear them say.”

“Can you tell me anything about the people at the Castle?” said Donal.

“Ay,” answered Andrew, “I could, but there’s a heap o’ things ’at’s better to be fun’ oot nor kenned afore han’. Ilka place has it’s ain shape, an’ maist things has to hae some parin’ to gar them fit. Only i’ the case o’ a leevin’ sowl the parin’ maunna come

at the quick — that is at the conscience, to hurt it. Onything short o' that may and maun be put up wi', for it's a' to the mortifcein' o' the auld man wi' his affections an' lusts. That's what I tell yoong Eppy — mony's the time ; but she canna see things plain yet. Maist fowk see but like the blin' man when he was half cured, and could tell fowk frae trees only by their gangin'. Man, did it ever strick ye 'at maybe deith might be the first waukin' to come fowk ? ”

“ It has occurrt to me,” answered Donal ; “ but mony things come intil a body's heid 'at there's nae time, for the time, to think oot ! They lie and bide their time though.”

“ Ye're richt there. Dinna ye lat the clergy, or the lovers o' the law an' the letter, perswaud ye 'at the Lord wadna hae ye think. Him 'at obeys, though nane ither, can think wi' safety. We maun do first the thing 'at we ken, an' syne we may think about the thing at we dinna ken. I think 'at whiles he wadna say a thing jist no to stop fowk thinkin' about it. He was aye at gettin' them to make use o' the can'le o' the Lord. It's my belief 'at ae main obstacle to the growth o' the kingdom is first the oonbelief o' believers, an' neist the w'y 'at they lay doon the law. Afore they hae learnt the rudimen's o' the trowth themsel's they begin to lay the grievous burden o' their dullness an' their ill-conceived notions o' holy things upo' the min's and consciences o' their neebours, fain to haud them frae growin' ony mair nor themsel's. Eh man, but the Lord's won'erfu' ! Ye may daur an' daur, an' no come i' sicht o' 'im ! ”

Donal had never before met one who seemed to have gone so much through the same spiritual

country he had himself gone through ; and even to a youth with an aching heart the friendship of such a man might well be a consolation. For the only cure for sorrow is the truth. It were indeed a sore thing were there any other.

The church stood a little way out of the town, in a churchyard overgrown with grass, which the wind blew like a field of corn. Many of the stones were out of sight in it. The church, a relic of old Catholic days, rose out of it like one that had taken to growing and so got the better of his ills. They walked into the musty, dingy, brown-atmosphered house. The cobbler led the way to his humble place behind a pillar, where Eppy was seated waiting them. The service was not so dreary to Donal as usual ; the sermon had some real thought in it ; and his heart was drawn to a man who could say he did not understand, or the way of the Lord was not revealed to him.

“Yon was a fine discourse,” said the cobbler as they went homeward.

Donal saw nothing very fine in it, but the scope of his experience was not so wide as that of the cobbler ; the discourse had hinted many things to him which had not been suggested to Donal. Some people demand from the householder none but new things others none but old, whereas we need of all the sorts in his treasury.

“I hae na a doobt it was a’ richt, as ye say sae, Anerew,” said his wife ; “but for mysel’ I could mak naither heid nor tail o’t.”

“I said na, Doory, it was a richt,” returned her husband ; “that would be to say a heap for onything human ; but it was a guid honest sermon.”

“What was yon ’at he said about the mirracles no bein’ teeps?” asked his wife.

“It was God’s trowth ’at he said.”

“Gie me a share o’ the same, Anerew.”

“What he said was this — ’at the sea ’at Peter gaed oot upo’ wasna’ first and foremost to be luikit upo’ as a teep o’ the inward an’ spiritual troubles o’ the believer, still less o’ the troubles o’ the Church o’ Christ. The Lord deals na wi’ teeps but wi’ fac’s. Here was danger an’ fear, an, the man had to trust or gang doon. Gien the hoose be on fire we maun trust; gien the watter come in an’ threaten to gang ower oor heids we maun trust; gien the horse rin awa’ wi’ ’s, we maun trust. Him ’at canna trust in siclike, I wadna gie a plack for ony ither kin’ o’ faith he may hae. God’s nae a mere thought i’ the warl’ o’ thought, but a leevin’ pooer in a’ warl’s alike. Him ’at gangs to God wi’ a sair heid ’ill the suner gang til ’im wi’ a sair hert; an’ them ’at thinks na he cares for the pains o’ their bodies ’ill ill believe he cares for the doobts and perplexities o’ their inquirein’ speerits. To my min’ he spak the best o’ sense.”

“But I h’ard him say naethin’ o’ the kin’!” said Donal.

“Did ye no? Weel, I thought it cam’ frae him to me!”

“Maybe I wasna’ gaein’ the best heed,” acknowledged Donal. “But what ye say is as true as the sun i’ the h’avens. It stan’s to rizzon.”

The day passed in wonderful pleasure and quiet. Donal felt he had found another father and mother.

The next day, after breakfast, Donal said to his host —

“Noo I maun pey ye for my shune, for gien I dinna pey at ance, I canna tell hoo muckle to ca’ my ain, an’ what I hae to gang by till I get mair.”

“Na, na,” returned the cobbler. “There’s jist ae preejudice I hae left concernin’ the Sawbath-day. I most firmly believe it’s a preejudice, for siller’s the Lord’s wi’ the lave o’ the warl’ he’s made. But I canna win ower ’t. I canna bring mysel’ to tak siller for ony wark dune upo’ ’t. Sae ye maun jist be content to lat that fle stick to the Lord’s wa’. Ye’ll du as muckle for me some day.”

“There’s naething left me but to thank ye,” said Donal. “But there’s the ludgin’ an’ the boord—I maun ken about that afore we gang further.”

“That’s nane o’ my business,” replied Andrew. “I lea’ a’ that—an’ ye wad best do the same—to the gudewife. She’s a capital manager, an’ she winna chairge ye ower muckle.”

Donal laughingly agreed, and went out for a stroll.

He wandered along the bank of the river till he came to the foot of the hill on which stood the old castle. Seeing a gate a little further off, he went to it, and finding it open and unattended, went in. A slow-ascending drive went through the trees and round and round the hill, along which he took his way through the aromatic air that now blew and now paused as he went. Between the boles of the trees which seemed to be climbing up to attack the fortress above, he could see some of its lower windows, looking like those of cellars. When he had gone a little way, out of sight of the gate, he threw himself down among the trees, and fell into a deep reverie. The ancient time

arose before him, when, without a tree to cover the approach of an enemy, the fortress rose defiant and bare in its strength, like an athlete stripped for the fight, and the little town clustered close under its protection. What wars had there blustered, what rumors blown, what fears whispered, what sorrows moaned! But were there not as many things loud and boisterous and hard to bear now as then? Did not many an evil seem now as insurmountable as then? The world will change only as the heart of man changes. Growing intellect, growing civilization will heal man's wounds only to cause the deeper ill to break out afresh in new forms, nor can they satisfy one longing of the human soul. Its desires are deeper than that soul itself, whence it groans with the groanings that cannot be uttered. As much in the times of civilization as in those of barbarity the soul needs an external presence to make its life a good to it. In the rougher times of violence men were less conscious of the need than in our own. Time itself, the starving, vacant, unlovely time, is to many the one dread foe they have to encounter. Others have the awful consciousness of a house empty and garnished in which neither Love nor Hope dwell, but doors and windows lie open to what evil things may enter. To others the very knowledge of self, with no God to protect from it, a self unrulable, insatiable, makes existence a hell. For Godless man is a horror of the unfinished, a hopeless necessity for the unattainable, in which arise and revel monstrous dreams of truest woe. Money, ease, honor, can help nothing: the most discontented are of those who have all that the truthless heart desires.

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Such thoughts were coming and going in the brain of the young philosopher when he heard a slight sound somewhere near him — the lightest of sounds — the turning of the leaf of a book. He raised his head and looked around him. At first he could see no one. He sharpened his eyes to see through the tree-boles up the slope of the hill, and caught, a little distance from where he lay, the shine of an open book, and the hand that held it. He took the hand for that of a lady, so white and small was it. The trunk of a large tree hid the rest of the reclining form. He thought whether he ought not to rise and go away: wherever the people of the place liked to come, they would not like to meet a stranger using it like one of themselves. But this might be but a stranger like himself! Still it would be better to get back to the road. There was the lovely cloth-striped meadow to lie in if he would — only there was no shade there!

He rose quietly, but not quietly enough to steal his presence from the other — who had in truth been there for some time, and was aware of it. A keen, pale, high-browed face came from behind the tree, and a young man, rather tall and slender, rose with a swift grace and came towards him. Donal stood to receive him.

Seemingly about Donal's own age, though in fact two or three years younger, he came up to him and said, not without a haughtiness of which he was probably unconscious,

“I presume you are unaware that these grounds are not open to the public!”

“I beg your pardon, sir,” said Donal. “I found

the gate open, and the shade of the trees was enticing. I but meant to enjoy it for a few minutes."

While he spoke the youth had been examining him, nor had found any difficulty in reading what he was. At St. Mann's he had been familiar with the peasant-student.

"It is of no consequence," he returned with some condescension; "only my father is apt to be annoyed if he sees any one in the grounds. You are a student—not from St. Mann's, or I should, I think, know you by sight!"

"From St. James's," answered Donal.

"Oh, then"—

He was interrupted by a cry from up the hill—

"Oh, there you are, Percy!"

"And there you are, Davy!" he answered kindly.

A boy of about ten came precipitately towards them, now and then jumping a stump as he darted down between the stems.

"Take care, take care, Davy!" cried the youth. "You may slip on a root and fall!"

"Oh, I know better than that.—But you are engaged!"

"Not at all. Come along."

Donal lingered, not thinking that perhaps he ought to go: the youth had not finished the sentence he had begun!

"I went to Arkie," said the boy, "but she couldn't help me. I can't get the sense of this sentence; and for want of it I can't understand. I wouldn't care if it weren't a story."

He had an old folio under his arm. His brother took it with a smile.

“It is a curious taste for a child,” he said, turning to Donal, “but this little brother of mine has an absurd attraction to the old romances, and reads everything of the kind he can lay his hands on.”

“Perhaps,” suggested Donal, “they are the only fictions within his reach? I should fancy it a preference easily overcome with a course of Sir Walter.”

“I daresay you are right,” answered the youth.

“Will you let me look at your book?” said Donal, holding out his hand.

The boy gave it him. On the top of the page Donal read: “The Countess of Pembroke’s Arcadia.” He had heard of the book, or rather read of it, but had never seen it before.

“That’s a grand book!” he said.

“Do you know it?” said the elder. “It is horribly dreary reading. I tried it but couldn’t.”

“Tell me, sir,” said the boy, before Donal could answer, “what this sentence means?”

“I will try,” answered Donal, “but I may not be able, you know.”

“There it is!” said the boy, smiling as he pointed out to him the passage.

Donal began to read it at the top of the page.

“That’s not the place, sir!” said the boy. “It is there.”

“To know anything, you must know something of what goes before,” said Donal.

“Oh, yes, sir; I see!” he answered, and stood silent while Donal read.

He was a fair-haired boy, with ruddy cheeks and a healthy look; sweet-tempered evidently, but perhaps wayward notwithstanding.

Donal presently saw what the sentence meant — also the cause of the boy's difficulty.

“This is what it means,” he said, and told him.

“Oh, thank you! Of course it is!”

“You took the word to mean almost the opposite, didn't you?”

“I did, sir.”

“I thought so! It does sometimes, but not always.”

“Thank you! thank you! Now I shall understand!” said the boy, and ran away up the hill.

“You seem to understand boys as well as their books!” said the youth.

“I do a little,” answered Donal. “My own boyhood is dear to me. And I am so aware of ignorance that I know to deal with it. I have almost an ambition to understand ignorance.”

The young man again cast a would-be penetrating glance at his interlocutor.

“I should have thought it enough to understand knowledge,” he said.

“I never seem to understand anything till I understand its shadow: you know what queer shapes the shadows of the plainest things take.”

Once more the youth glanced keenly at Donal.

“I wish I had had a tutor like you,” he said.

“Why?” asked Donal.

“I should have done better. He was too old.— Where do you live?”

Donal told him he was lodging with Andrew Comin, the cobbler. A curious smile just hovered over the youth's face and passed, followed by a look of slight perplexity.

“Good morning!” he said, as if waking from a brief silence.

“Good morning! I shall not intrude again,” returned Donal, and went away.

On Thursday, the cobbler told him he had heard the minister was come home, and the same evening Donal went to the Mörven Arms to inquire, for the third time, if his box was come. The landlord said if a great heavy tool-chest was the thing he meant, it had come — for Donal’s box was indeed like a carpenter’s chest, and though it had but few clothes had a good many books, which made it as heavy almost as any tool-chest.

“*Donal Grant* wad be the name upo’ ’t,” said Donal.

“Deed I didna luik,” said the landlord: “Gang an’ luik: it’s i’ the back yard.”

The conversation took place in the entrance of the Morven Arms; and as Donal passed through to the yard, he heard something of the talk going on in a room where a few of the townsfolk were drinking, and the name of the earl mentioned.

Now Donal had not asked anything of Andrew concerning the young man with whom he told him he had been conversing; for he had before perceived that the cobbler held himself bound, not to talk about the family in which his granddaughter was a servant. He was therefore now the more curious to know the town talk about the castle. What was said in public he thought he might hear. So he asked the landlord to let him have a bottle of ale, and went into the room and sat down.

It was a decent sort of parlor with a sanded floor.

The persons assembled were of the superior artisans of the town. They were having a tumbler of whisky-toddy together after the market-day. One of them was a stranger, and they had been giving him various pieces of information concerning the town and its neighborhood. One of the company was an old man, who lost never a chance of airing old scraps of knowledge—not one of which was too worthless to raise him by its mere possession miles in his own estimation above his fellow mortals.

“I min’ the auld man weel,” he was saying as Donal entered. “He was a verra different man frae this present yerl. He wad sit doon as ready as no wi’ ony pair body like mysel’ an’ gie him his cracks an’ hear the news, drinkin his glaiss, an’ makin’ naething o’ ’t: But this man, haith! he’s no mouze to meddle wi’. Wha ever saw him cheenge word wi’ brither man? That wad be ’til a’ knowledge himsel’ o’ the family o’ auld Adam!”

“I never h’ard hoo he cam to the teetle; they say he was but some far awa’ cousin,” remarked a farmer-looking man, florid and stout.

“I dinna freely un’erstan’ the richts o’ the case. But he was ain brither to the last yerl, wi’ richt to the teetle, though, by some cantrip o’ the law, I suppose, wi’ nae richt to the property. That he’s but takin’ care o’ till his niece come o’ age. This man was a heap about the place afore his brither dee’d, an’ they war freen’s as weel’s brithers; an’ some says the lady Arctura—h’ard ye ever sic a hathenish name for a lass!—is b’un’ to marry the yoong lord. There was a yoong son o’ the last yerl, ’at they said wad hae had the teetle as weel’s the property, but he

dee'd a bairn shortly afore his father. There was a heep o' country clash about it," added the old man somewhat mysteriously; it's a' dee'd awa', though, haith! but there's queer stories about the place yet, only wha kens what to believe o' what fowk says! There's naebody can be said to ken the yerl but his ain man, they tell me. Some wad hae't there's a curse upo' the place because o' something or ither 'at naebody kens but them 'at's been deid an' gane this mony a lang day. For mysel', I never was i' their coonsel — no' even to the buyin' or sellin' o' a lamb."

"Weel," said a white-haired, pale-faced man who had not yet spoken, "we ken frae Scriptur' 'at the sins o' the fathers is veesitit upo' the children to the third an' fourth generation, an' wha can tell whaur sae mony things is dark?"

"Wha can tell," said another, who had a judicial look about him, in spite of an unshaven beard, and a certain general disregard to appearances, "wha can tell but the sins o' oor fathers may be lyin' upo' some o' oorsel's at this verra moment?"

"I' that case, I can *not* see the thing wad be fair," said one.

"We maunna interfere wi' the wull o' the Almighty," rejoined the former. "It gangs its ain gait, an' mortal canna tell what that gait is. His justice winna stan' objections."

Donal felt that to be silent now would be to hang back from witnessing. He shrunk from argument lest he should wrong the right, but he could take his place for God. He drew his chair towards the table.

"Wad ye lat a stranger put in a word, freen's?" he said.

“Ow ay, an’ welcome!” was the answer he heard.
“We setna up here for bein’ the men o’ Gotham.”

“Weel, I wad speir a question gien ye wad lat me.”

“Speir awa’. The rizzonable answer I winna insure,” said the man who had first spoken.

“Weel, wad he please tell me what ye mean by the justice o’ God?”

“Onybody can answer that: it’s the punishment o’ sin. He gies to the sinner what he deserves.”

“That’s an unco ae-sidit definition o’ justice.”

“Weel, what wad ye mak’ o’ ’t?”

“I wad say justice means fair play; an’ the justice o’ God lies in this, ’at he gies ilka man, beast or deevil, fair play.”

“I’m doobtfu’ aboot that,” said a drover-looking fellow. “We maun gang by the word; an’ the word says ’at he veesits the ineequities o’ the fathers upo’ the children to the third and fourth generation: I never could see the fair play o’ that!”

“Dinna ye meddle wi’ things, John, ’at ye dinna un’erstan’; ye may fin’ yersel i’ the wrang box,” said the old man.

“I want to un’erstan’,” returned John. “I’m no sayin’ he disna du richt: I’m only sayin’ I canna see the richt o’ ’t.”

“It may weel be a’ richt an you no see ’t.”

“Ay, weel that! But what for sud I no say I dinna see ’t? Isna the blin’ man to say ’at he’s blin’?”

This was found unanswerable — at least no reply was forthcoming, and Donal ventured again to speak.

“It seems to me,” he said, “’at we need first to

un'erstan' what's comprised i' the veesitin' o' the sins o' the fathers upo' the children afore we come to ony jeedgment concernin' the richt or the wrang o' 't."

"Ay, that's sense eneuch!" confessed the responsive murmur that followed.

"I haena seen muckle o' this warl' yet, compared wi' you, sirs," Donal went on, "but I hae been a heap my lane amo' nowt an' sheep, an' I had leisure for a heap o' things to gang throuw my heid; an' I hae seen something as well, though no muckle. I hae seen a man wha had a' his life been a douce honest man come intil a heap o' siller, an' gang to the dogs: no a neebour wad 'maist speik til 'im."

Again a murmur indicated a belief if not a similar knowledge on the part of the listeners.

"Weel," Donal went on, "he gaed a' to dirt, sae 'at the bairns he left ahint him whan he dee'd o' drink cam a' upo' the perris — or wad hae come but for the compassion o' some 'at kenned him in 's poverty. Noo, ye wad say, it was a veesitin' o' the sins o' the father upo' the children 'at they war left i' sic poverty an' disgrace."

"Ay, doobtless!"

"Weel, whan I h'ard last about them, they were a' like eneuch to turn oot honest lads an' lasses, an' guid workers at what they were putten til."

"Ow, I daur say!"

"An' what micht ye think the probability gien they had come intil a lot o' siller whan their father dee'd — judgin' frae what it played wi' him?"

"Ow, deed, 'at they wad hae gane the same gait he did!"

"Was there hardship 'than, or was there favor

i' that veesitation o' the sins o' their father upo' them?"

There was no answer. The toddy went down their throats, and the smoke came out of their mouths, but no one dared to think even that it might be a good thing to be born poor instead of rich. How few there are capable of fearing the possession of riches! The disciples because they had brought only one loaf, and were afraid of a little hunger, did not know what the leaven of the Pharisees meant!—and that with him in the boat whom they had seen feed five thousand. So entirely was the subject dropped that Donal thought he had failed to make himself understood. He did not yet know the objection people in general have to talking of things on the only ground on which they are worth talking about—the eternal principles of truth and right. They will set up for judges of right while they themselves are all wrong! He saw that he had cast a wet blanket over the company, and judged it better to take his leave. Borrowing a wheelbarrow, he took his chest home, and unpacking it in the court, carried his books and clothes up to his room.

The next day he put on his best coat, and went to call on the minister, to whom he had an introduction from the clergyman of his own parish. When he was shown into his study, there, seated at the table, he saw the same man he had met on his first day's journey, who had parted from him in such displeasure. He would let him, however, deal first with the matter, and presented his letter.

Mr. Carmichael gave him a keen glance as he took it, but said nothing till he had read it.

“Well, young man,” he then asked, looking up at him with severity, “what would you have me do?”

“Give me a chance, if you please, of any employment in the scholastic line you may happen to hear of, sir; that’s all,” said Donal.

“That’s all!” repeated the clergyman, with something very like a sneer; “but what if I think that *all* a very responsible thing to do? What if I should imagine myself set in charge over the minds of the young to guard them from such influences as you and such as you would exercise over them! What if I should have chanced to come to know you and your opinions rather better than the good man whose friendship for your parents has made him take such a kind interest in you! You little thought how you were undermining your own prospects when you spoke as you did to a stranger on the road. My old friend would scarcely wish me to welcome to my parish a person whom if he had known him better he would have been glad to get rid of from his own! The sooner you take yourself out of this, young man, the better! You may go to the kitchen and have your dinner, for I have no desire to render evil for evil, but I will not bid you God-speed.”

“Would it not be well I were hanged at once, sir?” said Donal.

“It might be well for the world at large,” replied the minister, “but unhappily I have not the power.” He smiled a grim smile, then repeated, “Go and have your dinner.”

“I thank you,” answered Donal, “but I shall get my dinner from a more willing hand than yours.”

“Whose, if I may ask?” said the minister, wishing

to know with whom in his parish he had already scraped a friendship.

“From his who said, ‘Why do ye not of yourselves judge what is right?’ — as I was trying to do when it pleased you, sir, to find fault with me for it. Good morning, sir!”

With the words, Donal left the room, and on the doorstep of the house met a youth he had known by sight at the university, who had the repute of being one of the worst-behaved there: he must be the minister’s son!

I wonder if the clergy ever ask themselves how it is that, notwithstanding lovely exceptions, the generality of their sons have such a character attributed to them! Is this a case of the sins of the fathers being visited on the children? Does God not visit the virtues of the fathers on the children as well? Parents whether of the clergy or laity, had better look to it.

A little ruffled, and not a little disappointed, Donal walked away, almost unconsciously took the road to the castle, which was the most inviting in the immediate neighborhood of the town, and came to the gate, where he leaned on the top bar, and stood thinking.

Suddenly, down through the trees to the road came Davie, bounding, and pushed his hand through between the bars, to shake hands with him.

“I have been looking out for you all day,” he said.

“Why?” asked Donal.

“Forgue sent you a message.”

“I have had no message. When did you send it?”

“Eppy took it this morning.”

“Ah, that explains! I have not been at home since breakfast.”

“It was a letter. My brother wrote it. It was to say that my father would like to see you.”

“I will go home and get the letter, and then I shall know what to do.”

“Why, do you live there? The cobbler is such a dirty little man! Your clothes will smell of leather.”

“He’s not dirty,” said Donal. “His hands do get dirty — very dirty with his work — and his face too, and I daresay soap and water can’t get the dirt off quite. But he will have a nice earth-bath one day, and that will take it all off. And if you could see his soul — that is as clean as clean can be — so clean it is quite shining.”

“Have you seen it?” said the boy, looking up at Donal doubtfully, as if unsure whether he was making game of him, or meaning something very serious.

“I have had a glimpse or two of it. I don’t think I ever saw a cleaner. You know, my dear boy, there’s a cleanness much deeper than the skin.”

“I know!” said Davy, but stared at him as if he wondered he would speak about such things.

Donal returned his gaze; out of the fulness of his heart both his mouth spoke and his eyes shone.

“Can you ride?” said Davy.

“Yes, a little.”

“Who taught you?”

“An old mare of my master’s when I was a herd boy.”

“An old mare! — Ah, you are making game of me! I do not like to be made game of,” said Davy.

“No, indeed,” affirmed Donal. “I never made game of anybody — But now I will go and see what is in the letter.”

"I would go with you," said the boy, "but my father will not let me go beyond the grounds. I don't know why, but it is a good big cage and I don't much mind."

Donal hastened home, and found himself eagerly expected because of the letter young Eppy, as they always called her, had brought for him from her master — it was from the earl himself, not from his son. The purport of it was that his sons had informed him concerning their interview with him, and it would give him pleasure to see him if he would favor him with a call.

"Can you tell me anything about the earl," he said, having read it to the cobbler and his wife, "that I may know what sort of man I have to do with?"

"No," answered the cobbler. "Onything I could tell ye wad be but hearsay, an' the jeedgment o' anither, which same I nicht think wrang mysel' gien I had the chance o' jeedgin'. It's a heap better to gang wi' oonprejudiced e'en an' hert; for the vera sicht o' the e'en's affeckit wi what ye're tellt afore. Ye see what ye're tellt to luik for, an' ye dinna see what ye're no tellt to luik for, by reason o' bein' upo' the ootluik for the ither. Gang an' jeedge for yersel' I say. It's better onygait to mak yer ain mistaks an' no ither fowk's. Ye'll be guidit, an' be allooed to see what ye're allooed to see."

The cobbler had ceased his work as he spoke, but now he resumed it with vigor: he had spoken and meant to say nothing more. In a few minutes Donal was again on the way to the castle.

CHAPTER IV.

NEW ACQUAINTANCE.

NOT a person did he meet on his way from the gate up through the wood. The hill ascended with its dark ascending firs, up to its crown of silvery birches, above which rose like a helmet the gray mass of the fortress. It was only the back of it he saw until the slowly circling road brought him to the other side. Like the thread of a fine screw it went round and up. Turret and tower, pinnacle and battlement, appeared and disappeared with continued change as he climbed. Not until at last he stood on the top, and from an open space beheld almost the whole front, could he tell what it was really like. It was a grand pile, but looked a gloomy one to live in. Who can, however, tell anything from a mere outside! He found himself on a broad platform, part of which was in grass. From the grass rose a gravelled terrace, and from the terrace rose the castle. He ran his eye along the front seeking a door. Seeing none, he ascended the terrace by a broad flight of modern steps, and approached a deep recess in the front, where met apparently two portions of the house of differing date. On one side of the recess he found a door, not large, flush with the wall, thickly studded and bound with iron, surmounted by the Morven horses carved in the gray stone, and surrounded by

several mouldings on the flat of the wall. Seeking some means of announcing his presence, he saw a handle at the end of a rod of iron, which he concluded to be a bell-pull. He pulled, but heard nothing: the sound of the bell was smothered in a wilderness of stone walls. Soon, however, appeared an old, and, as Donal thought, strange-looking servant, a man bowed and slow, with plentiful hair white as wool, and a mingled look of childishness and caution in his wrinkled countenance.

“The earl wants to see me,” said Donal.

“What name?” said the man.

“Donal Grant; I don’t think he knows my name.”

“Then how am I to make his lordship understand?” rejoined the man.

“Tell him the young man he wrote to at Andrew Comin’s.”

The man left him, and Donal looked about him. The place where he stood was a mere entry for size—a small cell enclosed by huge walls—as he could see by the thickness of that through which he had entered, and another wherein was the low, round-headed door by which the butler had disappeared—a door like the entrance to a prison. There was nothing but bare stone around him, with again the arms of the Morven family cut deep into it on one side. The ceiling had no regular shape—was neither vaulted nor groined, but looked as if caused rather than constructed by the accidental coming together of ends of stone stairs and the corners of several floors at different elevations. This was all he had to look at for full ten minutes, when the butler returned, and asked him to go with him.

Through the little door they passed, and Donal found himself in what seemed but a larger and less irregular stone-case, adorned with heads and horns and skins of animals. Crossing this the man opened a door covered with red cloth, looking incongruous in the midst of the cold hard stone. And then Donal saw that which not only he never forgot, but of which the impression remained all his life fresh as at first.

He was now in a place, which, though not very large, was yet fit to be regarded as the entrance-hall of a castle. It was octagonal, and its sides were adorned with arms and armor of many kinds and shapes, up from the top of the door in every side almost to the domed ceiling. The doors had carved lintels and doorposts of stone and were of oak that shone with the polish of care and cleaning through hundreds of years. But the thing that laid sudden hold on Donal's imagination was not anything of these: down, as it were descending suddenly, into it, out of some far removed region of height dropping right down into it like a lighting bird at the last moment of a perfectly calculated descent, came the last of a wide turnpike stair of slow spiral sweep, and of enormous diameter — such a stair as he had never seen in the wildest Gothic story he had ever imagined. Like the swift-revolving centre of a huge shell, it shot upwards out of sight, with plain promise of endless convolutions beyond — a stair fit for the feet of Jacob's vision, though it was of no such stair he ever dreamed, but of one grander yet, whose ascent was visible, not to the imagination only but the eye, throughout to the very threshold of heaven, and down which you might see the angels descending for long hours before

they reached you. But this stair, though not so grand, was of more wonderful construction, and indeed fitter to the way angels generally reach us — unseen till the last few steps of their descent from the far off infinite. It was of course of stone, and very old — yet not worn as would have been a narrow stair whereon the feet must constantly fall in much the same spots, wearing and wearing till one foolishly wonders how such thin steps can carry us so soon to such a height. A great rope of silk, a modern luxury, ran up along the wall for a hand-rail, and along this moving his withered hand, up the glorious ascent climbed the aged serving man, suggesting to Donal's eye as he followed, the crawling of a black beetle, and to his heart the redemption of the sons of God.

With the stair yet ascending above them as if it would never stop, he paused upon a step no broader than the rest, and opening a door in the round of the wall, said, "Mr. Grant, my Lord," and stood aside for Donal to enter, when he found himself in the presence of a man who looked as if he might have one time been a lord, but had broken down under that or some other burden. He was a tall but bowed man, with a large-featured white face, thin and worn with evident suffering, and a deep-sunken eye that gleamed with an unhealthy life. His hair was thin, but plentiful enough to cover his head, and was only streaked with gray. His hands were long and thin and white; his feet if not large, at least in large shoes, looking the larger that they came out from narrow trousers of the check called in Scotland shepherd-tartan. He wore also a coat of light-blue cloth, which must have been many years old, so high was its collar of velvet, and

so much too wide was it for him now. A black silk neckerchief was tied carefully about his throat, and a waistcoat of the pine-apple pattern on a shawl-stuff completed his costume. On his long little finger shone a stone which Donal took for a diamond. He motioned him to a seat, and turned to his writing, with a rudeness more like that of a successful contractor than a nobleman. But it gave Donal the unintended advantage of becoming a little acquainted both with his lordship and with his surroundings. The room in which he sat was comfortably furnished, with little in it worthy of remark — not large, nearly a square of fifteen feet or so, wainscoted high up, with a good many things on the walls, two or three riding whips, a fishing-rod, a pair or two of spurs, a sword with gilded hilt, a strange-looking dagger like a flame of fire, one or two old engravings, and what looked like a plan of the estate. The one window, small, with a stone mullion, looked to the south, and the summer sun was streaming in. The earl sat in the middle of its flood — pouring down on his head and shoulders, and in the heart of it looking cold and bloodless. He seemed about sixty or sixty-five years of age, and looked as if he had rarely or never smiled. Donal tried to imagine what the advent of a smile would do for his face, but failed in the attempt. He did not find himself in the least awed in the presence of the great man, or at all awkward or anxious as to his behavior. Earl or prince or king, what matters it to the man who respects everything human, has no ambition to look anything but what he is, has nothing to conceal, and nothing to gain but what no man can give him, is fearful of no to-morrow, and has no re-

spect to riches? If Donal was not all this yet, it was toward all such being that the tide of his life set. He sat neither fidgeting nor staring, but quietly taking everything in.

After a time the earl raised himself, pushed his writing from him, turned towards Donal, and said with courtesy,

“Excuse me, Mr. Grant; I wished to talk to you with the ease of duty done, and presumed a few minutes would be of little consequence to you — of none indeed if we should, as I hope, come to know each other better.”

More polite the earl’s address could not have been, but there seemed nevertheless a something between him and Donal that was not to be passed — nothing positive, but a gulf of the negative. This might however be but the fancy that rushes to fill the vacuum of fact unknown.

“I have plenty of time at your lordship’s service,” replied Donal, with the ease that comes of simplicity.

“You have probably guessed already why I sent for you?”

“I have hoped, my lord; but guesses and hopes require confirmation or dissolution.”

The earl seemed pleased with his answer. There was something of old-world breeding about the lad that commended him to the man of the older world. Such breeding is nothing rare among Celt-born peasants.

“My boys told me they had met a young man in the grounds” —

“For which I beg your lordship’s pardon,” said

Donal. "I did not know the place was forbidden ground."

"Do not mention it. I hope you will soon be familiar with the place. I am glad of the mistake. They told me you had a book of poetry in your hand, also that you explained to the little fellow something that puzzled him. I surmised you might be a student in want of a situation — in a country where there are more brains and more education — more of everything in fact than money. I had been looking out for a young man to take charge of the boy — he is getting too much for his cousin — and I thought it possible you might serve my purpose. I do not doubt you can give such an account of yourself as will show you fit for the charge. I must of course think of Lord Forgue as well. He has just come home from St. Cross's, and will soon leave for Oxford. Over him of course you would have no direct authority, but you could not fail to influence him. He never went to school, but had tutors till he went to college. Do you honestly think yourself one to be trusted with such a charge?"

Donal had not a glimmer of false modesty, and answered immediately,

"I do honestly believe I am, my lord."

"Tell me something of your history. — Where were you born? and what were your parents?"

Thereupon Donal told all he thought it of any consequence to the earl to know about him.

His lordship did not once interrupt him with question or remark, but heard him in silence. When he had ended —

"Well," he said, "I like all you tell me. Those

who have not had too many advantages are the more likely to enter into the difficulties of others and give them the help they require. You have of course some testimonials to show."

"I have some from the professors, my lord, and one from the minister of the parish, who knew me all the time I was a farm-servant before I went to college. I could get one from Mr. Sclater too, whose church I attended while there, if your lordship would write for it, or wish me to write."

"Show me what you have," said his lordship, more and more pleased with him.

Donal took the papers from the homely pocket-book his mother had made for him, and handed them to the earl. His lordship read them with some attention, folding each as he had done with it, and returning it to him without remark, saying only with the last, "Quite satisfactory."

"But," said Donal, "there is one thing I should be more at ease if I told your lordship: the minister of this parish would tell you I was an atheist, or something very like it — an altogether unsafe person to trust with the care of man, woman, or child. But he knows nothing of me."

"On what grounds then would he say so?" asked the earl — without showing the least discomposure. "I thought you were a stranger to this place!"

Donal told him how they had met, and what had passed between them, and how the minister had behaved to him in consequence when he presented his introduction. The earl heard him gravely, made no comment, was silent for a moment, and then said,

"Should Mr. Carmichael address me on the sub-

ject, which I do not think likely, he will find me, I suspect, by that time too much prejudiced in your favor to be readily influenced against you. But I can easily imagine his mistaking your freedom of speech: you seem to me scarcely prudent enough for your own interests. Why say all you think? You seem afraid of nothing."

"I fear none but one, my lord."

"And who may that be?"

"He who can destroy both soul and body in hell."

"And who is that?"

"The devil, I take it, sir. I don't fear him as an enemy, but as a pretended friend, sir. I am afraid of his creeping in!"

The earl was silent; his gray face seemed to grow grayer, but it might be only that the sun just then went under a cloud, and he was suddenly folded in its shadow. After a moment he spoke again.

"I am quite satisfied with you so far as I know you Mr. Grant. And as I should not like to employ you in direct opposition to Mr. Carmichael, not that I belong to his church, for I am myself an Episcopalian, the best way will be to arrange matters at once before he can hear anything of the affair: then I can tell him I am bound to give you a trial. — What salary do you want?"

Donal replied he would prefer leaving the salary to his lordship's judgment if upon trial he found his work worth paying.

"I am not a wealthy man," said his lordship, "and would prefer some understanding on the matter."

“Try me then for three months — I can’t show how I do in less than that — give me my board and lodging, the use of your library, and at the end of the time a ten-pound note to send home, and after that we shall both see.”

The earl smiled and agreed. Donal departed to prepare for taking up his abode at the castle the next day, and with much satisfaction and a heart filled with hope walked to his lodging. He had before him the prospect of pleasant work, plenty of time and book-help to pursue the studies he most loved, an abode full of interest and beauty, and something to send home to his parents.

The Comins warmly congratulated him on his success, and showed no small pleasure at the frustration of the minister’s injustice.

“Surely the wrath of man shall praise thee,” said the cobbler; “the remainder of wrath shalt thou restrain!”

Their mid-day meal was long over, but Mistress Comin had kept and now cooked to perfection for him a piece of fish, and he dined to his entire content on what most English students would have regarded as very short commons indeed. Donal was in perfect health, thence able to make full use of whatever he ate, and so could do with less than many. He had not, indeed, learned to eat largely, or to find any enticement in variety. What was lacking to him of education by sickness, which in its time is an essential, had in part been made up for by what most men would call hardship, but he would have acknowledged only as the hardness which Paul says a good soldier of Jesus Christ must endure, and by

the disappointment Ginevra had caused him ; with his cheerful and thorough response, he had not yet required more.

Suffering, more or less, awaits every youth. However he may count it the one thing to be avoided, he shall not succeed in avoiding it, neither are they to be counted specially fortunate who escape with the least share of it. If they would but await what will come, and accept the thing that is sent them, it would make men of them in half the time. There is more to be had out of the ordained oppositions in things than from the smoothest going of the world's wheels. Whatever makes the children feel that they are only out to nurse, and have here no abiding city, but a school of righteousness and truth and love, is a precious uplifting step to the only success.

In the afternoon Donal went out into the town to get some trifles he wanted before going to the castle. As he turned to the door of a certain draper's shop, he saw at the counter the minister talking to the draper. Having no desire to encounter him, he would have gone elsewhere for what he sought, but for unwillingness to turn his back on anything. He went in. By the minister stood a young lady, who having completed her purchases, was now listening to the conversation. The draper looked up when he entered. A glance passed between him and the minister. Then the draper came to Donal, and having heard what he wanted left him and went back to the minister. Donal, finding that no more notice was taken of him, found it awkward, and left the place.

“High an' mighty!” said the draper, annoyed at

losing the customer to whose dispraise, to say the least of it, he was listening: "he nicht hae waitit till his betters war saired!"

"Worse than dissent a good deal!" said the minister, pursuing his own remarks.

"Doobtless, sir! it is that," answered the draper. "I'm thinkfu' to say I never had a doobt mysel', but ay took what I was tauld, ohn arglebarglet aboot trifles. What hae we sic as yersel' set ower's for, gien it binna to haud's i' the straicht path o' what we're to believe an' no to believe? Eh, it's a fine thing no to be accoontable!"

The minister was an honest man so far as he knew himself and honesty, and did not relish this form of submission, although in truth, it was the natural result of the same practically carried out; for where is the difference between accepting the word of man, and accepting man's explanation of the word of God? Has either any authority save in appeal to the heart and conscience? He took a huge pinch from a black snuff-box and held his peace.

In the evening Donal settled his account with the cobbler's wife. But he found her demand so much less than he expected, that he had to expostulate. She was firm, however, and assured him she had gained, not lost. As he was putting up his things.

"Lea' a buik or twa, sir," she said, "at whan ye luik in the place may luik hame-like. Wes' ca' the room yours yet. Come as aften as ye can. It does my Anerew's hert guid to hae a crack wi' ane 'at kens sae weel what the maister wad be at. 'Mony ane,' says he, 'ill ca' him Lord, but feow tak the tribble to ken what he wad hae o' 'im.' But there's my

Anerew — it's true I canna tell, mony's the time, what **he's** efter, but I ken weel he's aye efter the maister. As he sits yon'er, at his wark, he'll be thinkin' by the hoor thegither, ower something 'at He said 'at he canna win at the richts o'. 'Depen' upo' 't' he says whiles, 'depen' upo' 't lass, 'at whaur onything he says disna luik richt to hiz, it maun be 'at we haena won at it!'"

As she ended, the cobbler came in, and taking up what he fancied the thread of the dialogue went on:

"An' what are we to think o' the man," he said, "'a's content no to un'erstan' what he was at the tribble to say? To imaigne him say things 'at he dinna mean fowk to un'erstan' whan he said them, is to say he maks a mock o' 's."

"Weel, Anerew," said his wife, "there's jist mony a thing he said 'at I can *not* un'erstan'; naither am I that muckle the better for yer ain explainin' o' the same; sae I maun jist lat them sit. A' 'at's left me is to min' the sma' things I div un'erstan'."

Andrew laughed his quiet, pleased laugh.

"Weel, lass," he said, "the doin' o' ae thing's better nor the un'erstan'in' o' twenty. Nor wull ye be lang ohn un'erstan't muckle 'at's dark tae ye noo; for the maister likes nane but the duer o' the word, an' her he likes weel. Be blyth, lass, for yes' hae yer fill o' un'erstan'in' yet!"

"I'm fain to believe ye speyk the trowth, Anerew!"

"It maun be the grit trowth," said Donal.

The next morning came a cart from the castle to fetch his box; and after breakfast he set out for his new abode.

Once more he took the path by the river-side. The

morning was full of jubilation. The sun and the river and the birds were jubilant, and the wind gave life to everything. It rippled the stream and fluttered the long webs stretched bleaching in the sun: they rose and fell like white waves on the bright green lake of the grass, and women, homely Nereids of the little sea, were besprinkling them with spray. Then there were dull wooden sounds of machinery near, no discord with the sweetness of the hour, speaking only of activity, not labor. These bleaching meadows went a long way by the river-side, and from them seemed to rise the wooded base of the castle. A sudden swell of nature's delight heaved Donal's bosom; then came a sting of self-reproach; was he already forgetting what had seemed his inextinguishable grief? But again his bosom swelled as he said to himself, "God is more to me than the whole world of men and women! When my maker puts joy in my heart, shall I not be glad? When he calls my name shall I not answer? He is at my right hand; I shall not be moved. He is everything in himself, as *well* as himself beyond everything!"

He stepped out joyfully, and was soon climbing to the castle, where he was again admitted by the old butler.

"Mr. Grant," he said, "I'll show you at once how you can go and come at liberty;" and therewith led him through doors and along passages to a postern opening on a little walled garden at the east end of the castle. "That," he said, "you will find convenient. It is, you observe, at the foot of the northeast tower, and the stair in that tower leads to your room, so that you can come and go as you please. I will show

it you. There was just room and no more for your box to be carried up, and I hope we shall not have to take it down again in a hurry!"

"I wish you had left it till I came," said Donal. "I would have taken the content and left the content. Books are so heavy!"

"Heavier than all but plate and linen," returned the butler; "but they've broken neither backs nor wind."

While he spoke the old man was leading the way up a stair so narrow it might almost have gone inside the newel of the great turnpike staircase. Up and up they went, until Donal began to wonder; and still they went up and passed door after door.

"You're young, sir," said the butler, "and sound of wind and limb, or I would not have put you here. You will think nothing of running up and down."

"I never was up one so high before," said Donal. "The stair up the college-tower is nothing to it!"

"Oh, you'll soon learn to shoot up and down it like a bird. I used to do so almost without knowing it when I was page-boy to the old lord. I got into the way of keeping a shoulder foremost, and screwing up and down as if I was a blob of air rather than a lanky lad. How this old age does play the fool with us!"

"You don't like it, then?"

"No, I do not — who does? What good is in growing old!"

"It's only that you get spent as you near the top of the stair. The fresh air at the top will soon set you up again," said Donal.

But his conductor did not understand him.

“ Ah, that is all very well so long as you're young and don't feel it : but stay till the thing has got you, and then you'll pant and grumble like the rest of the old fellows.”

Donal said nothing. In the distance he saw Age on his slow, sure way after him, ready to claw him in his clutch, as the old song says. “ Please God,” he said to himself, “ I'll be ready by the time he comes up, to try a fall with him ! Eternally young, the years have no hold on thee ; let them have none on thy child. I, too, shall have life eternal before thou hast done with me.”

They reached the top. The stair indeed went a little farther, for it seemed to go on through the roof ; apparently the tower had been meant to go higher yet. But at the place they had reached was a door ; the man opened it, and Donal found himself in a small room, nearly round, a portion of the circle taken off by the stair. On the opposite side was a window projecting from the wall, whence he could look in three different directions. The wide country lay at his feet. He saw the winding road by which he had ascended, the gate by which he had entered, the meadow with its white stripes through which he had come, and the river flowing down the vale. He followed it with his eyes : lo, there was the sea, shining in the sun like a diamond shield ! It was but the little German Ocean, but it was one with the great world-ocean. He turned to his conductor, who stood watching him.

“ Yes,” said the old man, answering his look. “ It's a glorious sight. When I came here first, fresh from the flats of Essex, I thought I was look-

ing into eternity itself from the top of this tower. I would have contrived to have my room here, only I should never have known when I was wanted, and my master could not get on many minutes without me."

The walls were bare even of plaster; Donal could have counted the stones in them, but they were dry as a bone, and he was not careful of creature comforts. The old man saw him look round, and interpreting his look from his own experience:

"I see, sir," he said, "you are wondering how to keep warm here in the winter! See here: you can shut this door over the window! See how thick and strong it is; and there is your grate! And for wood and peats and coal, there is plenty to be had below. It *is* a labor to carry them up, but if I was you, I would set to o' nights, when nobody was about, and had nothing else to do, and carry till I had a good stock laid in."

"But," said Donal, "I should fill up my room so that I could not move about in it!"

"Ah, you don't know," said the old man, "what a space you have here, all to yourself! Come this way."

Two or three steps more up the stair, just one turn, and they came to another door. It opened into wide space, and from it, still following, Donal stepped on a ledge or bartizan, without any parapet, that ran round the front part of the tower, passing above the window of his room. It was well he had a tolerably steady brain, for he had to wonder why the height should affect him more than that of a much higher rock up on Glashgar. But doubtless he

would soon get used to it, for the old man had stepped out upon the ledge without the smallest hesitation! Round the tower he followed him. Nearly opposite the door on the other side a few steps rose to a watch-tower—a sort of ornate sentry-box in stone, where one might sit and regard with wide vision the whole country before him. Avoiding this, another step or two led them to the roof of the castle, consisting of great stone slabs. A broad passage ran between the rise of the roof and a battlemented parapet: here was no danger of falling. Advancing a little way they arrived at a flat roof, to which they descended by a few steps. Here stood several rough wooden sheds, with nothing in them.

“Here is stowage enough!” said the old man.

“Doubtless!” answered Donal, the idea of his ærie growing more and more agreeable the longer he contemplated it. “But would there be no objection to my using it for such a purpose?”

“What objection could there be?” returned the butler. “I do not believe a single person but myself knows there is such a place.”

“And shall I be allowed to lay in what stock I please?”

“Everything is under my care, and I allow you,” said the butler, with no little importance. “Of course you will not waste — I am dead against waste! but as to necessaries, keep your mind easy, sir. I’ll see to you.”

Donal never thought to ask why he was placed so apart from the rest of the family, for he never plagued himself about his dignity, or the behavior of others to him: the subject was not interesting to him:

it was their business, not his: and that he should have such entire command of his own leisure and privacy as this isolation yielded him was a consequence exceedingly satisfactory. The butler left him with the information that dinner would be ready for him in the schoolroom at seven o'clock, and he proceeded at once to settle himself in his new quarters. Finding some shelves in a recess of the wall, he arranged his books upon them, laid his few clothes in the chest of drawers, put on his lighter pair of shoes and a clean shirt, got out his writing material, and sat down. Though his open window was so high, the warm pure air came in full of the aromatic odors rising in the hot sunshine from the young pine-trees far below, while from a lark far above descended news of heaven-gate. The scent came up and the song came down all the time he was writing to his mother — a long letter, telling her all that had befallen him since his arrival at Auchars. When he had closed and addressed it, he fell into a reverie. He was glad he was to have his meals by himself; he would be able to read all the time! But how was he to find the schoolroom? He would have to go down and look about till he found it. Surely, however, some one would fetch him! They would remember that he did not know his way about! It wanted yet an hour to dinner-time, when finding himself drowsy, he threw himself on his bed, and presently fell fast asleep. The night descended while he slept, and when he came to himself, its silences were deep around him. But it was not dark: there was no moon, but the twilight was long and clear. He could read by it the face of his watch, and found it was twelve

o'clock ! No one had missed him, or taken pains to find him ! And now he was very hungry ! but he had been hungrier before and survived it ! What did it matter ! Then he remembered that in his wallet were still some remnants of oat cake ! Never before had he fallen so suddenly and so fast asleep except after a hard day's labor ! He was not particularly tired, having done little for many days. It must be something in the high air of the place, perhaps in the new sense of ease ! He must have been more anxious than he knew ! could a man have feelings he was not aware of ? At least he might not know them for what they were ! He took his wallet in his hand, and stepping out on the bartizan, crept with careful steps round to the watch-tower. There he seated himself in the stone chair, and ate his dry morsels in the starry presences with profound satisfaction. His sleep had refreshed him : he was wide awake ; yet was there upon him the sense of a strange existence. Never before had he so known himself ! Often had he passed the night in the open air, but never before had his night-consciousness been such ! He was as much alone, as much parted from the earth as the ship-boy on the giddy mast ! He could see nothing below but a dimness — the earth and all that was in it massed into a vague shadow. It was as if he had died and gone away to a world in which existence was independent of solidity and sense. Above him was domed the vast of the starry heavens : he could neither flee from it nor attain unto it ! For a moment he felt it the symbol of life as Christ meant it, and for a moment that life seemed a hopeless thing : he could never attain to it ! He hung suspended between heaven and

earth, the outcast of both, the denizen of neither! The true life seemed ever to retreat — ever as he was on the point of grasping its reality! Was there anything could assure him of its reality less than the beholding of the face of the Son of Man — the assurance from his own mouth that all is true, all as was said of him, all well — that life was a thing so altogether divine, that he could not know it till his very essence was pure? Alas, how dreamlike was the old story! Did he believe that God was indeed reached by the prayers, affected by the needs of men? He was not God our Saviour if he was not; but how was he to feel sure of it? But already while he thought, he was crying into the great world around him to know whether there was an ear in it to hear. — What if there should come to him no answer? How frightful then would be his loneliness! But with the thought came courage and hope. He would cry! Not to seem to be heard might be part of the discipline of his darkness! It might be for the perfecting of faith that he was not to know how near God was to him! Patience must have her perfect work!

“Lord!” he cried, “eternal life is to know thee and thy father. I do not know thee and thy father; I have not eternal life; I have but life enough to make me hunger for more. Lord, show me plainly of the Father whom thou alone knowest.”

And as he prayed thus, the thought of his Father in Heaven grew upon him till it seemed more than his heart could hold, and the universe that rose above him seemed not large enough to hold in the hollow of its immensity the heart that swelled with it. “God is enough,” he said, and sat in peace.

All at once came like a clang muffled to suffocation, through the night a strange something. Whence it came or what it was he could not even conjecture. Was it a moan of the river from below? Was it a lost music-tone that had wandered from afar and grown faint? Was it one of those mysterious sounds he had read of, born in the air itself, and not yet explained of science? Was it the fluttered skirt of some angelic song of lamentation? For if the angels rejoice, surely they must lament: it is a heathenish idea of perfection that it cannot sorrow where cause of sorrow is rife! or was it a stifled human moaning? Was any wrong being done far down in the white-striped meadows below, by the banks of the stream whose platinum-gleam he could descry through the molten amethystine darkness of the starry night! He could not tell; he must wait and listen.

Presently came a long protracted moan, as it seemed, which yet he doubted might be the sound of some muffled musical instrument. Verily night was the time for strange things! Might there not be sounds begotten in the fir-trees by the rays of the hot sun, and born in the stillness of the following dark silence, as the light which the diamond receives from the sun glows out in the following gloom? Some parents and their progeny are doomed never at once to exist in a place, never to meet until the restoration of all things!

Again the sound — hardly to be called sound! It was like that the organ gives out too deep to affect the hearing, only this seemed rather too high to be heard — for he could not be sure his ear heard it at all; it seemed only his soul that heard it with

mysterious organ! Sleep was gone far from him— why should he not steal softly down the dumb stone-stair? He might somewhere, in or out of the house, find its source? Some creature of the earth, human or less, might be in trouble, and needing help!

He crept back along the bartizan to the stair, dark as the heart of the night itself, and groped his way down, thinking how the spiral stair is the safest of all, for you cannot tumble very far ere brought up by the enclosing cylinder. Arrived at the bottom, he found room, but feeling about, could not find the door out which the butler had shown him; it was solid stone wherever his hands encountered wall. He began to fear he should not find the stair again; after a few steps he could not tell in what direction it lay, and soon saw nothing before him but the prospect of spending the night he knew not where, waiting for the light. He might be going round and round without knowing it!

He had got into a long windowless passage connecting two wings of the house. Along this he felt his way, now with one hand, now with the other on a wall, and on the ground with his feet, lest he might fall down some stair or trap, and came at last to a door—low-browed like so many in the house. Opening it—was it a thinner darkness or the faintest gleam of light he saw? The same moment he heard again the sound he had followed, now plainly enough a musical, but faint and far-off still; a stray downy wind-wafted plume from the skirt of some harmony kept dropping at intervals within his aural ken. At such a time of the night surely it was strange! But there was no need he should discover

farther! The music doubtless was that of one who like himself could not sleep, seeking to solace himself with sweet sounds, breathing a soul into the uncompanionable silence! The question was what was he to do with himself? The conviction that the sounds were those of some musical instrument, had brought him the miserable consciousness of being like a spy in the house the first night he was in it. He must remain where he was, or run the risk of being found wandering over the house in the dead of the night, like a thief, or one searching into its secrets. He must sit down where he could, with the hope that the morning would enable him to find his way back to his quarters. Feeling about him a little, his foot struck against what proved the step of a stair. Examining it with his hands, he was all but certain it was the same he had ascended in the morning: even in a great house like that there could not well be two such royal stairs! to ascend here would be but to wander deeper into the labyrinth! He sat down on the stair, and leaning his head on his hands composed himself to a patient waiting for the day.

Waiting pure perhaps is the hardest thing for flesh and blood to do well. The relations of time to mind are very strange. Some of its phenomena seem to prove that time is only of the mind — belonging to the intellect as good and evil belong to the spirit. Anyhow, if it were not for the clocks of the universe, one man would live a year — a century — where another lives but a day. Leaving aside the suggestions of Rosalind in “As you like it,” look at the testimony concerning the effect of certain drugs on the sense of time; while in a dream a man may

seem to himself to have lived an age. But the mere motion, not to say the consciousness of empty time is something fearful. It is this empty time that the fool is always trying to kill instead of to fill. I believe nothing but the presence of the living God can fill it, though it be but the shape our existence takes to us. Only where He is, is no emptiness. Eternity itself will be but an intense present to the child with whom is the Father. Such thoughts alighted, flitted, and passed, for the few first moments, through the mind of Donal as he sat half consciously waiting for the dawn. It was thousands of miles away, over the great round of the sunward-turning earth! His imagination woke, and began to picture to him the great hunt of the shadows, as they fled before the arrows of the sun, over the broad face of the mighty world — its mountains, seas, and plains in turn confessing the light, and submitting to him who slew for them the haunting demons of their dark. The moments became but the small cogs on the wheels of time, by which the dark castle was turning ever to the light: he forgot the labor of waiting. The cogs were caught and turned swiftly, and the time and the darkness sped. Now and then a tone would steal into his ears, and mingling with his fancy, would be the music-march of the light as it drew nearer and nearer to his rescue from the dungeon of the dark.

But that was no musical tone that made the darkness shudder around him! He sprang to his feet. It was plainly a human groan — a groan as one in dire pain, but the pain rather of a soul's agony. It seemed near him too! but it is marvellous how

sounds travel at night, and in certain airs and certain buildings. It was much farther off than seemed. But the next instant he was feeling his way up the stair — cautiously, as if on each successive step he might come on the man who had groaned. Tales he had both heard and read of old haunted houses rushed upon him: what if he were now pursuing the sound of an invisible actor of the past — a creature of his own memory — a mere haunter of the present which he could not influence — one without relation to the tangible or the embodied, save in the groans that yet could enter a human ear! But it was more with awe than fear that he followed. Up and up he felt his way, all about him as still as darkness and the night could make it. A ghostly cold crept over his skin: it seemed all being drawn together as by gently freezing process; there was a pulling at the muscles of his chest, as if his mouth were being pulled open by a martingale. But he could not have been much afraid in the ordinary sense of the word, seeing he not merely noted but afterwards recollected the symptoms of his affection. But then there was in Donal a remarkable because unusual combination of great moral simplicity with specially acute personal consciousness. There is no reason why this should not be, or in his case it could not have been; but such consciousness is not unfrequently associated with some tendency to duplicity: I do not say *with duplicity*, but with some tendency thereto. As he felt his way along the wall, sweeping its great endless circle round and round in its spiral ascent, all at once his hand seemed to go through it, and he started and stopped. It was the door of the

room into which he had been shown to meet the earl! It stood wide open, but all within was dark, except for the faintest glimmer through the window from the star-filled sky. But was not that a glimmer from somewhere? He stepped into the room, and stood just within the doorway. The glimmer came from a door he was sure he had not seen in the morning. The same moment he plainly heard the groan, but nearer. Some one must be in sore need of help! He approached the door. It was in the same wall as that by which he had entered, but close to the other side of the room. It must open under the curve of the staircase! What room could there be there? He found when he went through it, that there was but room to turn right round to a second door in the same plane, immediately on the other side of the wall which stood at right angles to both and separated them from each other. This door was open. A lamp, nearly spent, hung from the ceiling of a small room of nondescript appearance, which might be an office or study, or a sort of place where papers might be kept. It had rather the look of an antechamber, but that it could not be, for there was no door but that by which Donal had entered. This was, however, what he thought afterwards. He had now scarce a moment to think. For in the dim light he discovered almost immediately the vague form of a man leaning up against the wall, with his ear close to it, as if he were listening to something beyond it. His face was a little towards Donal, and his eyes were staring wide, yet he took no notice of him, and seemed not to see him. Notwithstanding the signs of life about him,

Donal felt as if in the presence of the disembodied, stood fascinated, and made no attempt to retire or conceal himself. The figure presently drew back from the wall, turned his face to it, put up both his hands flat against it, and moved them up and down, and this way and that over it. Then, in a low muttering voice, he said — or seemed to Donal to say, “It’s coming through! I’m sure it’s coming through,” glanced at the palms of his two hands with horror, and began to rub them against each other, as one does to remove something that sticks fast.

Donal soon came to himself. He had read of sleep-walking in “Macbeth,” and concluded this was a case of it before him; the open eyes, the pallid face, the moaning words, all seemed like it. He had read also that it was dangerous to wake one in that condition, and that such seldom came to mischief when left alone. He was therefore about to slip away as he had come, when the far-off sound of a single chord crept through the silence, and the same moment the earl once more laid his ear to the wall, but the silence seemed only to reign deeper. He went through the same fearful dumb show as before, then spoke something like the same words, and rubbed his hands together, and turned to the door. Donal made haste to get out of his path, and hastily felt his way back to the stair. Then first Donal felt in danger of being overcome by dread; for in stealing away through the darkness from one who could find his way without his eyes, he felt as if pursued by a creature not of this world, which might any moment lay its hands upon him. But he reached the stair in

safety, turned downwards a step or two, then lingered. A moment or two more and he heard the earl step upon the stair. He crept as close to the newel as he could, leaving the great width of the stair for the earl to pass him, if he were going down, but to his great relief, he turned upward instead, as he had hoped he would, and he heard his step grow duller and duller as he ascended. Donal went back to the bottom of the stair, and sitting down began again to wait. Not another sound came to him through the night. The slow hours rolled away, and the slow light drew nearer. Sleep did not visit his eyes. As often as he was on the point of falling into a doze he would fancy he heard music, start wide awake, and listen intently through a silence that seemed to fill the whole universe and deepen around the castle.

It did seem a strange place he had got into! The more need of him perhaps for the young people in it. In the meantime he would be as if he knew nothing — and indeed what was it he knew beyond some of the vagaries of a sleep-walker? — and wait for what would come!

At length he was aware that the darkness had, unobserved of him, grown weaker — that the approach of the light was sickening it with the knowledge that it was about to be shot through and through in all directions. The dayspring was about to “take hold of the ends of the earth that the wicked might be shaken out of its lap.” The moment he thought he *might* be able to find his way, he sought again the long passage by which he had come. It was as dark as before, but again he felt his way along it, for at the other end there might be some light, and if not, it would be

safer to wait there. He reached the other end, nor had to wait long during the strife of dark and light ere he came upon the foot of his own stair. Up it he sped as if it were the ladder of heaven, closed the doors at the top, threw himself upon his bed, and after tossing about for two hours more, fell fast asleep and did not wake again till the sun was high in the heavens.

CHAPTER V.

IN THE NEW HOME.

NOR did he then wake of himself ; the words of old Simmons, the butler, roused him.

“I was afraid something was the matter, sir, when they told me you did not come down to dinner last night, and that you had not appeared for breakfast this morning.”

“If I had been awake,” said Donal, “I should not have known where to find my breakfast. You forget that the knowledge of an old castle is not an intuition !”

That Simmons understood the remark, I will not venture to say ; but he made him a good answer notwithstanding.

“How long will you take to dress ?” he asked.

“Ten minutes,” answered Donal.

“Then I will come again in ten minutes ; or, if you are willing to save an old man’s bones, I will be at the bottom of the stair in ten minutes to take charge of you. I would have looked after you better yesterday, but his lordship was taken very poorly last night, and I had to be in attendance upon him till after midnight, and so the thing went out of my head.”

When he reached it, Donal thought it impossible he should ever of himself have found his way to the schoolroom. With all he could do to remember the

turnings, he found the endeavor at last hopeless, and for the time gave it up with a not unpleasant despair ; the failure bore testimony to space and room and wonder and interest. Through passages of many various widths and lengths, as it seemed to him, through doors apparently in all directions, and up-stairs and down they went, and at last came to a long low room, barely furnished, with a pleasant outlook, and an immediate, though not so pleasant access to the open air. The windows looked upon a small grassy court with a wall round it and a sundial in the centre of it, while a door opened immediately on a paved court in the centre of the castle. At one end of the long room a table was laid for him, with ten times as many things as he could desire to eat, although the comparative abstinence the previous day had prepared him for a good breakfast. The butler himself, a good natured old fellow, with a nose somewhat too red to be preferred for ordinary wear by one in his responsible position, as if to make up for his previous neglect, waited upon him.

This service, Donal so little used to any, could not have endured without talking to him ; but further it did not make him feel awkward, because he would just as readily have waited on the butler as have him wait on him.

“ I hope the earl is all right again this morning,” he said.

“ Well I can't say he is quite himself. He's but a delicate man, is the earl, and has been so long as I have known him, which it's now a good many years. He was long with the army in India, and the sun, they say, give him a stroke, and ever since he have head-

aches that bad that he can't abear any one near him — not even his own sons, or his niece as is devoted to him. I never see a man so bad when he is bad! But in between he's pretty well, and nothing displeases him more than have any inquiry made after his health. I seen him sometimes look as if a man insulted him, astin' of him how did his lordship to-day, or how he have slep the night! But he's a good-hearted man, and a good master, and I hope to end my days with him. I'm not one as likes to see new faces an' new places every other year! One good place is enough for me, says I — yes, and one good coat, so long as it is a good one. Take some of this gamepie, sir; you'll find it good."

Donal made haste with his breakfast, to Simmons' astonishment had ended when he thought him well begun.

"Where should I be likely to come upon the young gentleman?" he asked.

"Master David is wild to see you, sir; he's only afraid the news is too good to be true. When I've cleared away, you have only to ring this bell out of that window, and he'll be with you as fast as he can lay his feet to the ground. For Lord Forgue, he must do as he likes. He'll come to you, I daresay, when he's in the humor. He's the earl that is to be, you know, sir, though he's not to have the property. Castle and all belongs to my lady Arctura. It's all arranged, as everybody knows, that Lord Forgue is to marry lady Arctura, and then it will be all right. They say the brothers agreed about that long years ago. She's a little older than he, but that don't matter where there's a title on the one side, and the

property belonging to it on the other, and cousinship already between them."

For an old servant, Donal thought him very communicative concerning family affairs; but then doubtless he told no more than, as he said, everybody knew. But what a name to give a girl — *Arctura!* Surely it was a strange house he had got into! No wonder Andrew Comin had left him to find out all about them himself!

As soon as Simmons had cleared the table, Donal rang the handbell from the window: a shout mingled with the last tones of it, next came the running of swift feet over the stones of the court, and Davy, wild with glee, burst into the room.

"Oh, sir!" he cried, "I *am* so glad! It is so good of you to come!"

"Well, you see, Davy," returned Donal, "everybody has got to do something to carry the world on a bit. I have got to work, and my work now is to help make a man of you. But I can't do much except you help me. Only, mind, if I seem not to be making a good job of you, I sha'n't stay many hours after the discovery. So if you want to keep me you must mind what I say, and let me help you to be the right sort of man."

"But it will be so long before I am a man," said Davy.

"Not so long, perhaps. It depends greatly on yourself. The boy that is longest in becoming a man, is the boy that thinks himself a man before he is a bit like one."

"Oh, come then, let us do something to make a man of me!" said Davy.

“Come along,” assented Donal; “I’m ready. What shall we do first?”

“Oh, I don’t know. You must tell me, sir.”

“Tell me, Davy, what you would like best to do — I mean if you might do what you pleased.”

Davy thought for a little while, then said :

“I should like to write a book.”

“What kind of a book?”

“Oh, a beautiful story, of course!”

“Isn’t it just as well to read such a book? Why should you want to write one?”

“Oh, because then I should have it go just as I wanted it! I am always — *almost* always — disappointed with the thing that comes next. But if I were to write it myself, then I couldn’t get tired of it, you know, because it would be just as I wanted it, and not as somebody else wanted it!”

“Well,” said Donal, after thinking for a moment, “suppose you begin to write a book — only I am afraid you will get tired of it before you have done enough to know whether you will like it or not.”

“Oh, no! I am sure I shall not. It will be such fun! So much better than learning verbs and nouns!”

“But the verbs and the nouns are just the things that go to make a story — with not a few adjectives and adverbs, and a host of conjunctions — and, if it be a very moving story, then a good many interjections! and these all you’ve got to put together so that they shall make good sense, or it will never be a story that you will like to read, and I shall like to read, and your brother and cousin will like to read — and perhaps your father too!”

“Oh, no, sir! papa wouldn't read a story! Arty told me he wouldn't. She doesn't either. But Percy reads lots — only he won't let me read the ones he reads.”

“Well,” said Donal, “perhaps you had better not begin the story till I see whether you know enough about those verbs and nouns to do it decently well. Show me your school-books.”

“There they all are — on that shelf! I haven't opened one of them since Percy came home and laughed at them all. Then Arty — that's Lady Arc-tura, our cousin, you know, said he might teach me himself; and he wouldn't; and she wouldn't; and I've had such a jolly time of it ever since — doing nothing but reading books out of the library! Have you seen the library, Mr. Grant?”

“No; I've hardly seen anything yet. Suppose we begin with a holiday, and you let me see what you like about the place, and so you will begin by teaching me!”

“Teaching you, sir! I'm not able to teach you anything!”

“Why, aren't you going to teach me the library? And aren't you going to teach me the place — all about this great beautiful old castle? And aren't you — though that will be without knowing it — going to teach me yourself?”

“That *would* be a funny lesson, sir!”

“The least funny, and the most serious lesson you could teach me! You are like a book that God has begun, and he has sent me to help him to go on with it, and I must learn what he has written already before I know what to do next.”

“But surely you know already what a boy is without learning me!”

“You might just as well say that because I have read one or two books, I must know every book, for the one is a book and the other is a book. To understand one boy helps to understand another, but it does not make one understand another. Every boy is a new boy, different from every other boy born before or after him. Every one has to be understood. If there be anybody that nobody understands, he is a very lonely boy indeed, and sometimes gets quite tired of life.”

“I know what you mean; for sometimes Arty won't hear me out, and then I feel so cross I should like to give her a good box on the ear. What king was it, sir, that made the law that no lady, however disagreeable, must have her ears boxed? Do you think it is a good law, sir?”

“I think it is better for you and me than for the lady, perhaps.”

“And sometimes when Percy says, ‘Oh, go away! don't bother me,’ I feel as if I could box his ears too, and that's very odd; for if I do hurt him ever, I am so sorry for it afterwards! Why then should I ever want to hurt him?”

“There's something to be done with this little fellow!” said Donal to himself. “Ah, why indeed?” he answered. “You see you don't understand yourself quite yet!”

“No indeed!”

“Then how can you think I should understand you all at once—and a boy must be understood, else what's become of him? He may be going

all wrong if nobody understands him! Fancy a poor boy having to live all day, and sleep all night, and nobody understanding him!"

"Ah, but *you* will understand me!"

"Only a little. I'm not half wise enough to understand any boy."

"Then—but isn't it what you came for?—I thought"—

He meant—"Do you think you are fit to be a tutor then!" and so Donal understood him.

"Yes," he answered, "I think I am fit to be your tutor, for I know that I do not quite understand any boy, and so I am the less likely to fancy I understand him when I do not; and what is of much more consequence, I know who does: there is one and only one who understands every boy just as well as if there was no other boy than that one in the whole world."

"I wish I knew who that was! I should go to him, and be sure of having fair play."

"That is just what I would have you to do."

"Tell me where he lives."

"I am going to teach you where he lives if I can: mere telling is not much use. Telling is what makes people think they know when they do not, and makes them foolish."

"Tell me his name."

"No, I will not, just yet: for then you would think you knew him, when you knew next to nothing about him. Look here; look at this book," he went on, pulling a copy of Bæthius from his pocket, "look at the name on the back of it. It is the name of the man that wrote the book."

Davy spelled it out.

“Now you know all about the book, don't you?”

“I don't know anything about it.”

“Well, then : my father's name is Robert Grant. Do you know what a good man he is?”

“No ; how should I? I should like to see him though.”

“Ah, yes! and you would love him. But, you see, your knowing the name of a person does not make you know the person.”

“But you said, sir, that if you told me the name of that person, I would fancy I knew all about him : I don't fancy I know all about your father now you have told me his name !”

“You have me there!” returned Donal. “I did not say quite what I ought to have said. I should have said that when we know a little about a person, and are used to hearing his name, then we are ready to think we know all about him. I heard a man the other day—a man who had never spoken to your father, profess to know all about him.”

“I think I know!” said Davie ; but now Donal was silent.

There are many who think that to confess ignorance is to lose respect, and doubtless it is so with the ignorant who claim to know. There is a worse thing, however, than to lose respect—to deserve to lose it, and that he who does who would gain a respect that does not belong to him. But such confession is even a ground of respect with an ordinarily well-bred child, and even with the ordinary run of boys will raise a teacher's influence : they recognize his loyalty to the truth. For to love the truth is a

far greater thing than to know it, for it is itself truth in the inward parts — act-truth, as distinguished from fact-truth: in the highest truth the knowledge and love of it are one, or, if not identical then coincident. The very sight of the truth is the loving of it.

They went out together, and when they had gone the round of the place, Davie would have taken him over the house; but Donal said they would leave something for another time, and made him lie down, and lie quite still for ten minutes. This he evidently thought a great hardship, but Donal saw that the boy needed to be taught to rest, as well as to have his activity directed — not to mention the discipline the lesson afforded. Even during those ten minutes he ten times forgot the command, and was on the point of jumping up to do something, only a word from Donal was enough to restrain him. What made this lesson the more necessary was that the restlessness of the boy, though coupled with rosy cheeks and sparkling eyes, had its chief origin in brain-activity, rather than in general animal vigor. When the ten minutes were over, he set him to do an addition sum. The boy protested that he knew all the rules of arithmetic.

“But,” said Donal, “I must know that you know them, for that is my business, as it is yours to know them. Do this one, however easy you find it.”

The boy obeyed, and in a few minutes brought him the sum — incorrect.

“Now, Davie,” said Donal, “you said you knew all about addition, but you have not done the sum correctly.”

“I have only made a blunder, sir.”

“But a rule is no rule if it is not carried out. Everything goes on the supposition of its being itself, and not something else. People you know that talk about good things without doing them, find themselves left out. You are not master of simple addition until it becomes at least a very unlikely thing that you should made a blunder in it.”

He saw that the boy found it hard to fix his attention; to do this upon something he did not yet understand, would be too hard for him; he must learn it in the pursuit of accuracy where he already so far understood. There he would not have to fight two difficulties at once — the difficulty to understand, I mean, and the difficulty to fix his attention. But for a long time he never kept him more than a quarter of an hour at work on the same thing. In order to become strong it is necessary to work as one who is not yet strong, only capable of doing a little more than hitherto; it is ruinous to act as if strong already. When the sum was done correctly, and a second brought without need of correction, he told him to lay his slate aside and he would tell him a fairy story. In this he succeeded tolerably — in the opinion of Davie, wonderfully; what a tutor was this, who let fairies into the schoolroom! The tale in truth was of no very fine or original construction, being the product of a faculty much impaired by the disuse of generations, though in the old time joyously exercised by the bards from whom Donal was descended. In it, as in so many such, the youngest brother gains in the path of righteousness what the elder ones lose through masterful selfishness. Donal had none of the objections of a truncated people to the presentation of the

right as victorious; they say it is not so in life. I say it is: Lazarus and Dives hardly look upon themselves as dead, though their brethren may. To teach children that vice may have the best of it, would be to teach them that there is no God. Let such do so who believe there is none, and desire their children to reap the good of the fact. The main question is, whether the reward is made most of, dwelt upon with most delight, or the conduct which, through many struggles, is victorious at last. No teacher's object should be to train such as the world counts heroes or successful men, but lovers of the truth — such as will not think great things of themselves because they do what any one is a coward or a liar for not doing. Truth and right are the lords of this world also, and must ultimately prevail, let prescription and money and brains and all be against them. The common man, costermonger, millionaire, or artist, laughs at this: all he understands by life is the space between life and death; the rest is to him a blank, a thing not to be thought about; whereas there is not a single question small enough to be argued out in that space. Tell the boy he must do the thing because it is right, even if he die for it; but do not tell him there is no one to care whether he does it well or not. If he be an honest man, he will yet do it, but his heart will sink within him; he will take less and less interest in life, will see less and less what is right, and will at length go to sleep over the whole affair, for life will cease to interest him, for lack of an essential life to believe in. It were a poor truth indeed that did not bring at last all things subject to itself! Is it a misfortune for men that truth

shall be victorious? That, as beauty and truth are one, so are truth and strength one? Must God be ever on the cross, that we poor worshippers may pay him *our* highest honor? Is it not enough to know that if the devil were the greater, yet would not God do him homage, but would hang for ever on his cross? This is the condemnation, that men will not enter into the joy of their Lord. Truth is joy and victory; and the true hero is adjudged to bliss, nor can in the nature of things, that is, of God who determines the very existence of things, escape it. Life is bliss; it can be nothing else; he who holds by life, opposing death, must be victorious, for his very life is a banishing, a slaying of death. A true man comfortless will fight, but, I repeat, without God, his end will soon come, for either he will cease to be true, or sink and die the sooner for his truth. The self-caused life alone is strong enough to resist to the last, and to make the God-born able to resist. There are different degrees of dying. A man may die for his opinion, but that is not dying for the truth; it may be only living for himself. A man who dies for the truth, therein dies to himself, as well as to all besides that is not true.

“What a beautiful fairy story!” cried Davie, when it ceased. “Where did you get it, Mr. Grant?”

“Where all fairy stories come from.”

“What is the name of the book?”

“The think-book.”

“What a funny name! I never heard of it! do you think it can be in the library?”

“No; it is in no library. It is the book God is always writing at one end, and blotting out at the other, that it may be written over again. That book

is made of thoughts, not words, and so it is the think-book."

"Oh, I understand! you got the story out of your own head!"

"Yes, perhaps; but how did it get into my head?"

"I can't tell that. Nobody can tell that."

"Nobody can that never goes up above his own head — that never shuts the think-book, and stands upon it. When he does, the think-book swells to a great mountain that lifts him up above all the world, and then he sees where the stories come from, and how they get into his head. And now, are you not going to have a ride to-day? It is time if you are."

"I go when I like. I do just as I like."

"Well, we will now do what we both like, I hope. Now it will be two likes instead of one — that is, if we are to be true friends."

"We shall be true friends: that we shall!"

"How do you think that can be, between a little boy like you, and a grown man like me?"

"By me being good."

"By both of us being good — no other way. If one of us only was good, we could never be true friends. I must be good as well as you, else we shall never understand each other."

"How kind you are, Mr. Grant! You treat me just like another one!" said Davie.

"But we must not forget that I am the big one and you the little one, and that we can't be the other one to each other except the little one does what the big one tells him — that's the way we fit into each other."

"Oh, of course!" answered Davie, as if there could not be two minds about that.

This will be enough to show the footing on which Dónal placed his relation with the boy. And Davie responded with the devotion of a simple loving nature that has found its master. Before a week was over, they were working together a very type of the big and the little brother.

CHAPTER VI.

NO COWARD.

DURING that first day and the next, Donal never came in sight even of any other of the family. But on the third day, after their short early school — for he seldom let Davie work till he was tired, and never after — passing with him through the stable-yard, they came upon Lord Forgue as he mounted his horse for a ride. The horse was a small, fiery, thin-skinned thoroughbred. Ere his master was on him, he began to back and rear, nor would he be persuaded to go on. Regardless of the stones, Forgue gave him a cut with his whip. The animal went wild, dancing and plunging and kicking — going in every direction but forward. The young lord was a good horseman in the sense of having a good seat; but he knew little about horses, for they were to him as creatures to be compelled, not as friends of a most respectable lower order, with whom, their fashion understood, he might hold sweet counsel — and none the less that their relation was one of rule and obedience. He had not learned yet that to rule ill is worse than to obey ill. Kings may behave worse than is in the power of any subject, and many kings rank, and must be seen of the universe to rank immeasurably lower than any thief among their people. As Forgue was raising his

arm for another useless, cruel, and dangerous blow, Donal darted to the horse's head.

"You mustn't do that, my lord," he said.

But the worse part of Forgue's nature was awake ; in a rage with his horse, all the vices of his family rushed to the front. He looked down upon Donal with a wrath checked only by contempt.

"Keep off," he said, "or it will be the worse for you. What do you know about horses?"

"Enough to know that you are not fair to him ; and I will not let you strike the poor animal like that. Just look at this water-chain !"

"Hold your tongue, and stand away, or, by"—

"Ye winna fricht me, sir," said Donal, whose English would, for years, upon any excitement, turn cowardly and run away, leaving his mother-tongue to bear the brunt — "I'm no timorsome."

Forgue brought down his whip with a great stinging blow upon Donal's shoulder and back. The fierce blood of the Highland Celt rushed to his brain, and had not the man in him held by God and trampled on the devil, there might then have been miserable work. But though he clenched his teeth, he fettered his hands, and ruled his tongue, and the master of men was master still.

"My lord," he said, after one instant's thunderous silence, "there's that i' me wad think as little o' throtlin' you as ye du o' ill-usin' yer puir horse. But I'm no gaein' to drop his quarrel, an' tak' up my ain. That wad be cooardly. He's a puir champion 'at 'll du a'but suffer for his neebour." Here Donal patted the streaming neck, and recovering at once his composure and his English, went on. "I tell you, my

lord, the curb-chain is too tight. The animal is suffering as you have no conception of, or you would pity him."

"Let him go," cried his lordship, "or I will make you."

And he raised his whip again to strike the horse.

"I tell your lordship," said Donal, "it is my turn to strike if I choose to take it; and if you hit the animal again before that chain is slackened, I will pitch you out of the saddle."

For answer Forgue struck the horse over the head. The same moment he was on the ground; for Donal took him by the leg and threw him off on the other side. He was not horseman to keep, in such exceptional circumstances, his hold of the reins; and Donal, who had taken but one hand to unseat him, and kept his hold of the snaffle reins with the other, led the horse a little way off, and left the youth to get up in safety. The maddened creature was pouring with sweat, shivering and trembling, and throwing his head back every moment. It was all Donal could manage to undo the chain: it was too tight because it was twisted — his lordship had fastened it himself — and the sharp edges of some of the links were pressed into his jaw at the least touch of the rein. He had not rehooked it when Forgue was again upon him with another furious blow of his whip. The horse went wild again at the sound, and it was all he could do to hold him. But as his lordship did not repeat the blow, he was at length able with much patient soothing to calm him down. When he looked about him, Forgue was gone. He led the horse into the stable, put him in

his stall, and proceeded to unsaddle him. Then first he was re-aware of the presence of Davie. He was stamping with fierce eyes and white face, choking with silent rage.

“Davie, my boy!” said Donal, and Davie recovered his power of speech.

“I’ll go and tell my father!” he said, and made for the stable door.

“Which of us are you going to tell upon?” asked Donal with a smile.

“Percy, of course!” replied the boy almost with a scream. “You are a good man, Mr. Grant, and he is a bad fellow. My father will give it him well. He doesn’t often — but oh, can’t he just! Him daring to strike you! I’ll go to him at once, whether he’s in bed or not.”

“No, you won’t, my boy. Listen to me. Some people think it’s a disgrace to be struck: I think it’s a disgrace to strike. I have a right over your brother by that blow, and I mean to keep it — for his good. You didn’t think I was afraid of him?”

“No, no; anybody could see you weren’t a bit afraid of him. I would have struck him again if he had killed me for it.”

“I don’t doubt you would. But when you understand, you will understand, you will not be so ready to strike. I could have killed your brother then more easily than held his horse. You don’t know how strong I am, or what a blow of my fist would be to a delicate fellow like that. I hope the fall has not hurt him.”

“I hope it has — a little, I mean, only a little,” said the boy, looking in the face of his tutor. “But tell

me why you did not strike him. It would be good for him to be well beaten."

"It will, I hope, be better for him to be forgiven: he will be ashamed of himself the sooner, I think. But I did not strike him, because I am not my own master."

"But my father, I am sure, would not have been angry with you. He would have said you did no more than you had a right to do."

"Perhaps; but the earl is not my master."

"Who is, then?"

"Jesus Christ."

"O — oh!"

"He has said I must not return evil for evil, nor a blow for a blow. I don't mind what people say about it; I know *he* would not have me do what there was any disgrace in. He never himself even threatened those that struck him."

"But he wasn't a man, you know!"

"Not a man! what was he then?"

"He was God, you know."

"And isn't God a man — and ever so much more than a man?"

To this naturally the boy had no answer, and Donal went on.

"Do you think that God would have his child do anything that was disgraceful? Why, Davie, you don't know your own father! What he wants of you is to be a downright honest boy, and do what he tells you without fear. He'll take care that no harm comes to you."

Davie was silent. His conscience reproved him, as the conscience of an honest boy will reprove him,

himself consciously to do his will. Donal said no more, and they went on their ramble about the place.

In the evening Donal went to see Andrew Comin.

“Weel, hoo are ye gettin’ on wi’ the yerl?” asked the cobbler.

“You set me a good example of saying nothing about him,” answered Donal; “and I will follow it — at least till I know something about him, I have scarce seen him yet.”

“That’s right!” returned the cobbler, with satisfaction. “I’m thinkin’ ye’ll be ane o’ the feow ’at can rule their ain hoose — that is, haud their ain tongues till the hoor for speech be come. Stick ye to that, my dear sir, an mair ’ill be weel nor in general is weel.”

“I’m come to ye for a bit help; I want licht upon a question ’at’s lang triblet me.—What think ye? Hoo far does the comman’ lain upo’ ’s, as to warfare ’atween man an’ man reach? Are we never to raise the han’ to human bein’ think ye?”

“Weel, I tu hae thought a heap about it, an’ I daurna say ’at I’m jist absolute clear upo’ the subjec’ aither. But there may be pairt clear whaur a’ ’s no clear; an’ by what we un’erstan’ we come the nearer to what we dinna un’erstan’. There’s ae thing unco plain — ’at we’re on no account to return evil for evil: onybody ’at ca’s himsel’ a Christian ought to un’erstan’ that muckle. We’re to gie no place to revenge, aither inside or oot. We’re no therefore to gie blow for blow. Gien a man hits ye, ye’re to take it i’ God’s name. But whether things mayna come to a pint whaurat ye’re b’un’, still i’ God’s name, to defen’ the life God has gien

at the mention of the name of God, until he sets ye, I canna say — I haena the licht to justifee me in denyin' 't. There maun surely, I hae said it to mysel', be a time whan a man may be required to du what God dis sae aften — mak use o' the strong han' ! But it's clear he maun never do 't in anger — that's ower near hate — an' hate's the deevil's ain. A man may, gien he live verra near the Lord, be whiles angry ohn sinned : but i' the main, the wrath o' man worketh not the richteousness o' God ; an' the wrath that rises i' the mids o' encoonter, is no like to be o' the divine natur'. To win at it gien 't be possible lat's consider the Lord — hoo he did ! There's no word o' him ever liftin' han' to protect himsel'. The only thing like it was for ithers. To gar them lat his disciples alane — maybe till they war like eneuch til himsel' no to rin', but to bide wi' guid wull what cam to them, he pat oot mair nor his han' upo' them 'at cam to tak him : he strak them sair wi' the pooer itsel' 'at muvs a' airms. But no verra sair aither — he but knockit them doon — jist to lat them ken they war to do as he bade them, an' lat his fowk be — an' maybe to lat them ken 'at gien he loot them tak him, it was no 'at he couldna hin'er them gien he likit. I canna help thinkin' 'at we may aye stan' up for ither fowk. An' I'm no sayin' 'at we arena to defen' oor-sel's frae a set attack with design. But there's something o' mair importance yet nor kennin' the richt o' ony question."

"What can that be? What can be o' mair importance nor doin' richt i' the sicht o' God?" said Donal.

"Bein' richt wi' the varra thought o' God, sae 'at

we canna mistak, but maun ken jist what he wad hae dune. That's the big Richt, 'at's the mother o' a' the rest o' the richts. That's to be as the maister was. Only, whatever we du, it maun be sic as to be dune, *an' be dune* i' the name o' God; an' whan we du naething we maun du that naething i' the name o' God. A body may weel say, 'O Lord, thoo hasna latten me see what I oucht to du, sae I'll du naething!' Gien a man oucht to defen' himsel', but disna du't, 'cause he thinks God wadna hae him du't, God disna lea' him confedent for that. Or gien a body stan's up i' the name o' God, an' fronts a haill army o' enemies, div ye think God 'ill forsake him 'cause he's made a mistak? Whatever's dune wantin' faith maun be sin; it canna help it. But whatever's dune in faith canna weel be sin, though it may be a mistak. Only let no man mak the fearsome mistak o' presumption for faith! It's weel whan a man has made up his min', sae as to du his best, aither at endurin' or at fechtin': the thing 'at disna du's mixin' up the twa."

"I thank ye," said Donal. "I think I may be better able to mak up my mind by considerin' what ye hae said."

"But o' a' things," resumed the cobbler, "luik 'at ye lo'e fairplay. Fairplay's a won'erfu' word — a gran' thing constantly lost sicht o'. Man, though I hae been tryin' to win at the duin' o' the richt this mony a year, I daurna yet lat mysel' ack upo' the spur o' the moment whaur my ain enterest's concernt — no yet — for fear my ain side blin' me to the ither man's side o' the business. Onybody can un'erstan' his ain richt, but it taks trible an' thought to un'erstan' what anither coonts his richt. Twa richts canna weel

clash. It's a wrang an' a richt, or a pairt wrang an' pairt richt 'at clashes."

"Gien a'boddy did that, I doobt there wad be but feow fortins made!" said Donal.

"About that I canna say, no kennin'; but it maks 't the mair likely to me 'at I never kent a heap o' siller du muckle guid e'en i' the han's o' fairly guid fowk. Min', I'm only sayin' I never kenned. God forbid I sud discover a law whaur I haena knowledge! But haud this i' yer min', sir, 'at that same fairplay lies, alang wi' love, at the varry rute an' f'undation o' the universe. The theologians had a glimmer o' the fac whan they made sae muckle 'o justice, only, whan they say what they mean by their justice, it's sic a meeserable sma' bit plaister eemage o' justice, 'at it maist gars an honest auld body lauch. They seem to me like shepherds 'at rive doon the door-posts, an' syne block up the door wi' them."

Then Donal told him of the quarrel he had had with young Lord Fergie, and asked him whether he thought he had done right.

"Weel," answered the cobbler, "I'm as far frae blamin' you as I am frae justifeein' the yoong lord."

"He seems to me a fine kin' o' lad," said Donal "though some owerbeirin'."

"That the likes of him are mair to be excust for nor ither fowk, for they hae great disadvantages i' the position an' the up bringin'. It's no easy for him 'at's brought up a lord to believe 'at he's jist ane wi' the lave."

Donal went for a stroll through the town, to look on the movements of life in it. He met the minister,

but he passed without taking notice of him. The poor man was greatly annoyed at the march, as he said, that the fellow had stolen upon him, and thought of him as one who had taken an unfair advantage. What right had he to go by any other judgment of himself than the minister's? He had, it is true, little influence at the castle, for the earl never by any chance went to church. But his niece, Lady Arctura did, and took him for an authority in things spiritual — one of whom living water was to be had without money and without price. But then what she counted spiritual things were very common earthly stuff, and for the water, it was stagnant water from the ditches of a sham theology. But what was a poor girl to do who did not know how to feed herself? What but apply to one who could not feed himself? Out of many difficulties she thought he helped her, only the difficulty would presently clasp her again the same as before, and she must deal with it as she best could, or rather couldn't, till a new one arose with which to go to him again. She was one of those who feel the need of some help to live — some upholding from outside of themselves, but who, through the stupidity of teachers unconsciously false, men in a place where they have no right to be — men so unfit that they do not know they are unfit, direct their efforts, first towards having correct notions — a very different thing from divine ideas — then to work up the feelings that rightly belong to those notions. She was an honest girl so far as she had been taught — perhaps not so far as she might have been without having been taught. How was Lady Arctura to think aright without having had more than

a glimmer of highest truths? How was she to please God, as she called it, who thought of him in a way repulsive to every loving soul? How was she to be accepted of God, who did not accept her own neighbor, but looked down, without knowing it, upon her fellow-creatures, with the exception of about half-a-dozen? Is it any wonder that one in such a condition should neither enjoy nor recommend her religion? It would have been the worse for her if she had enjoyed it — the worse for others if she had recommended it. There was little of religion in her path but the difficulty of it, and that is hardly enough to make a religion. Religion is simply the way home to the Father. The true way is difficult enough because of our unchildlikeness — uphill, steep, and difficult, but there is fresh life with every surmounted height, a purer air gained, more life for more climbing. But the path that is not the true one is not therefore an easy one. Uphill work is hard walking, but through a bog is worse. Those who seek God with their faces hardly turned towards him, who, instead of beholding the Father in the Son, take the stupidest opinions concerning him and his ways from men who, if they have themselves ever known him, have never taught him from their own knowledge of him, but from the dogmas of others, go wandering about in dark mountains, or through marsh, spending their strength in avoiding precipices and bog-holes, sighing and mourning over their sins instead of leaving them behind and fleeing to the Father, whom to know is eternal life. If they set themselves to find out what Christ thought and knew and meant, and to do it, they would soon forget their false teachers, and

find it a good riddance. But alas! they go on bowing before long-faced, big-worded authority, the more fatally when it is embodied in a good man who, himself a victim to faith in men sees the Son of God only through the theories of others, and not with the clear sight of his own spiritual eyes.

All this time, however, Donal had not yet seen the lady. He neither ate, sat, nor worshipped with the family, but when not with Davie, spent his time in his tower-chamber, or out of doors. The grounds of the house were open to him, all but a certain walled garden on the southeastern slope, looking towards the sea, which the earl kept for himself, though he rarely walked in it. On the side of the hill away from the town was a large park reaching down to the river, and stretching a long way up its bank — full of delights in fine trees and glorious outlooks over a fair land to the sea on one horizon, and to the mountains on the other. Here Donal would wander, sometimes with a book, sometimes with Davie for his companion, and soon came to feel the boy's presence no interruption when he would think rather than talk. Any moment he would throw himself on the grass and read, sometimes aloud, when Davie would throw himself beside him, and let the words he could not understand flow over him in a sort of spiritual bath. Then on the river was a boat he could use when he pleased, and though at first he was awkward enough in the use of the oars, and would turn the bows in all directions when trying to row straight, he was soon master enough of the art to enjoy a row up or down the stream, especially in the twilight.

He was alone with his book under a beech-tree on

a steep slope to the river the day after the affair with Lord Forgue. Reading aloud, though in a low voice, he did not hear the approach of his lordship.

"Mr. Grant," he said, "if you will say you are sorry you threw me from my horse, I will say I am sorry I struck you."

"I am very sorry," said Donal, rising from the grass, that it was necessary to throw you from your horse: and perhaps your lordship may be able to remember that you struck me before I did so."

"That has nothing to do with it. I propose an accommodation or compromise, or what you choose to call it: if you will do the one, I will do the other."

"What I think I ought to do, my lord, I do without bargaining. I am not sorry I threw you from your horse, and to say so would be to lie. Should I come to see I did wrong, I will apologise without any bargaining."

"Of course everybody thinks himself in the right!" said his lordship with a sneer — not a very offensive one, for his was not a sneering nature.

"It does not follow that no one is ever in the right," returned Donal. "Does your lordship think you were in the right — either to me or to the poor animal who would not obey you because he was in torture?"

"I don't say I do."

"Then everybody else does not think himself in the right. I take your lordship's admission for an apology."

"By no means: when I make an apology, I will do it freely, not grudgingly. If I am in the wrong I will not sneak out of it."

He was evidently at strife with himself ; he knew he was wrong, but could not yet bring himself to say so.

It is one of the most unreasonable of human weaknesses that a man should be ashamed of *saying* he has done wrong, instead of so much ashamed of being wrong that he cannot rest till he has said so — the shame cleaving fast to him all the time until the confession clears it away. There is endlessly more in the simplest working of a human mind than all humanity can understand : how can a man live with *no* one to understand him !

Forge walked away a step or two, and stood for a few moments with his back to Donal, poking the point of his stick into the ground then all at once turned and said :

“ I will apologise if you will tell me one thing.”

“ I will tell you whether you apologise or not,” said Donal. “ I have never asked you to apologise.”

“ Tell me, then, why you did not return my blows yesterday.”

“ I should like to know why you ask — but I will answer you : simply because to do so would have been to disobey my master. I am bound to will as he wills, because he knows all about it, and I am his.”

“ That’s a sort of thing I don’t understand. It seems to me slavish. But that is none of my business. I only wanted to know that it was not cowardice ; for I could not make an apology to a coward.”

“ If I were a coward, you would owe me an apology all the same ; and he is a poor creature who will not pay his debts. But I hope it is not necessary I should either thrash or insult your lordship to convince you that I fear you no more than that blackbird there !”

Forgue gave a little laugh. A moment's pause followed, and then he held out his hand, but in a half-hesitating, almost sheepish way :

“Well, well ! shake hands !” he said.

“No, my lord,” replied Donal ; “I bear your lordship not the slightest ill-will, but I will shake hands with no one in a half-hearted way. When I shake hands with you it will be with my whole heart — and that is impossible while you are not sure whether I am a coward or not — the easiest way to convince you not being open to me.”

So saying, he lifted his bonnet, and threw himself down again upon the grass, and Lord Forgue walked away, offended afresh.

The next morning he came into the schoolroom where Donal sat at lessons with Davie. He had a book in his hand.

“Mr. Grant,” he said, “will you help me with this passage in Xenophon ?”

“With all my heart,” answered Donal, and in a few moments had him out of his difficulty. But instead of going, his lordship sat down a little way off, and went on with his reading — sat until master and pupil went out, and left him sitting there. The next morning he came again with a fresh request for Donal's assistance, when Donal found occasion to approve warmly of a proposed translation of Forgue's. From that time the young lord came almost every morning, and remained during the morning study, soon beginning to ask help with his mathematics too. He was no great scholar, but with the prospect of an English university before him, had a wholesome dread of making a fool of himself.

CHAPTER VII.

BECOMING ACQUAINTED.

THE housekeeper at the castle was a good woman, and was very kind to Donal, feeling perhaps that he belonged to her care the more that he was by birth of her own class. For it was soon known in the castle that the tutor "made no pretence to being a gentleman, but was one none the less, perhaps all the more." When his dinner was served, Mrs. Brooks would sometimes herself appear, to satisfy herself that proper attention was paid him, and would then sit down and talk to him while he ate his dinner, ready to rise and serve him upon any need. Their early days had not a little in common, though she came from the southern highlands of green hills and more sheep. She volunteered some information about the family, which, she said, it was well Donal should receive; and he soon concluded that the young people would not have been living together in so much peace but for the way in which her good temper and loving nature acted as a buffer between their sometimes conflicting notions.

I had better tell here a little of what Donal learned from her.

Lady Arctura was the daughter of the last lord Morven, and the sole heir to his property; Forgue and his brother Davie were the sons of the present

earl, and beyond the bare title could inherit nothing. Their mother died very soon after Davie was born. The present lord was the cousin of the last, and had lived with him for years before he succeeded — before even Mrs. Brooks's aunt, who had been housekeeper there before her, came to the castle. He had always been a man of peculiar and studious habits; nobody ever seemed quite to take to him; since his wife's death, his health had been very precarious. He was a good and generous master, and no one had anything to say against him. His cousin had left him guardian to lady Arctura, and so he had continued to live in the castle as before. His niece as well as his own children seemed sincerely attached to him, though it was little any of them saw of him. She had seen his wife — not very often, for she was a very delicate woman, and latterly all but confined to her own room; no one who had ever seen her once could ever forget her, for she was a very lovely woman, and since her death, a great change, every one said, had passed upon her husband. Certainly his behavior was sometimes very strange and hard to account for.

“He never gangs tae the kirk — no ance in a twal-month,” said Mrs. Brooks. “No to say I care varra muckle for the kirk mysel’, but fowk should be dacent, an’ wha ever h’ard o’ dacent fowk ’at dinna gang tae the kirk ance o’ the Sabbath! I dinna haud wi’ gaein’ twice mysel’; ye hae na time tae read yer ain chapters gien ye do that. But the man’s a weel behavit man, neither sayin’ nor doin’ the thing he shouldna; what he may think, wha’s to say! the mair ten’er conscience coonts itsel’ the waur sinner; an’ I’m no gaein’ to think what I canna ken. There’s

some'at says," she went on, "'at he led a gey lowse kin' o' a life afore he cam to bide wi' the auld yerl. He was i' the airmy, an' i' furreign pairts, they say, but aboot that I ken naething. The auld yerl was nae sanct himsel'. But rist the banes o' 'im! We're no the jeedges o' the deid, whatever we be o' the leevin'! I maun awa' to luik efter things, for a minute's an hour lost wi' they fule lasses. I'm sure whiles I dinna ken what to do wi' that lassie Comin', she's that upsettin'. Ye wad think she was ane o' the faimily, the w'y she behaves whiles: an' i'ither whiles that silly, 'at I'm doobtfu' whether she be a' there or no."

"I'm sorry to hear that," said Donal. "Her grandfather and mother I know very well; they're the best of good people."

"Oh, I daresay! But there's just what I hae seen afore i' my life; them 'at's brought up their ain weel enouch, their sons bairns they'll jist lat gang. Aither they're tired o' the thing, or they think they canna gang wrang. They hae aye lippent till yoong Eppie a heap ower muckle; an' there'll come ill o' 't ayont a doobt. But I'm naither a prophet nor the son o' a prophet, as the minister said last Sunday — an' said weel, honest man! for it's the plain trowth; he's no ane o' the major nor yet o' the minor anes! But haud him oot o' the pu'pit an' he dis no that ill. His dochter's no an ill lass aither, an' a great freen' o' my leddy's. But I'm clean ashamed o' mysel' to gang on this gait. Hae ye dune wi' yer denner, Mr. Grant? Weel, I'll jist sen' yoong Eppy to clear awa' an' lat ye till yer lessons."

It was now almost three weeks since Donal had be-

come an inmate of the castle, and he had scarcely set his eyes upon the lady of the house. Once he had seen her back, and more than once he had caught a glimpse of her profile, but he had never really seen her face, and they had never spoken to each other.

One afternoon he was sauntering along a neglected walk, under the overhanging boughs of an avenue of beeches, once the approach to a more modern house where the family had lived, but which was now inhabited by a decayed branch of the same, and had another entrance. He never went out without a book, though he often came back without having even glanced at it. This time it was a copy of Apocryphá, which he had never seen till he found it in the library. In his usual careful, unhurried fashion, he had begun to read it through, and was now in the book called the Wisdom of Solomon, at the seventeenth chapter, which narrates the discomfiture of certain magicians. Taken with the beauty of the passage, he sat down on an old stone roller, whose carriage had rotted away and vanished years ago, and read aloud. The passage was this — it will enrich my page : —

“ For they that promised to drive away terrors and troubles from a sick soul, were sick themselves of fear, worthy to be laughed at.

“ . . . For wickedness, condemned by her own witness, is very timorous, and being pressed with conscience, always forecasteth grievous things.

“ . . . But they sleeping the same sleep that night, which was indeed intolerable, and which came upon them out of the bottoms of inevitable hell,

“ Were partly vexed with monstrous apparitions,

and partly fainted, their heart failing them : for a sudden fear, and not looked for, came upon them.

“So then whosoever there fell down was straitly kept, shut up in a prison with iron bars.

“For whether he were husbandman, or shepherd, or a laborer in the field, he was overtaken, and endured that necessity, which could not be avoided ; for they were all bound with one chain of darkness.

“Whether it were a whistling wind, or a melodious noise of birds among the spreading branches, or a pleasing fall of water running violently.

“Or a terrible sound of stones cast down, or a running that could not be seen of skipping beasts, or a roaring voice of most savage wild beasts, or a rebounding echo from the hollow mountains, these things made them to swoon for fear.

“For the whole world shined with clear light, and none were hindered in their labor :

“Over them only was spread a heavy night, an image of that darkness which should afterward receive them : but yet were they unto themselves more grievous than the darkness.”

He had just finished so much, and stopped to think a little, for through the seeming incongruity of it, which he did not doubt arose from poverty of imagination disabling the translator to see what the poet meant, there ran an indubitable vein of awful truth, whether fully intended by the writer or not mattered little to such a reader as Donal — when, lifting his eyes, he saw Lady Arctura standing before him with a strange listening look. She was but a few paces from him, and seemed to have been arrested as she was about to pass him by what she heard. She

looked as if there were a spell upon her. Her face was white, and her lips white and a little parted. At first attracted by the sound of what was none the less like the Bible from the solemn half-crooning, half-chanting way in which Donal read it to the congregation of his own listening thoughts, yet was certainly not the Bible, she was presently fascinated by the vague terror of what she heard, and stood absorbed; for without the smallest originative power she had an imagination of prompt and delicate and strong response. Donal had but a glance of her, for his eyes, obeying a true instinct of good breeding, returned again at once to his book, and he sat silent and motionless, not seeing a word. For one instant, his ears told him, she stood quite still; then he heard the soft sound of her dress as, with all but noiseless foot she stole back, and sought another way home.

I must give my reader a shadow of her. She was rather tall, fair-skinned but dark-haired, like her cousin Forgue. Her thick crinkly hair was drawn back from her rather low forehead, in a roll over that and her temples. Her eyes were softly dark, and her features very regular — her nose perhaps hardly large enough, or her chin, and her mouth rather thin-lipped, but it would have been sweet except for what seemed a habitual expression of pain. Her forehead overhung her sweet eyes with a pair of dark brows, that gave a look of doubtful temper, yet restored something of the strength that was lacking in nose and chin. It was an interesting — scarcely a harmonious face, but in happiness might, Donal thought, look even beautiful. Her figure was eminently graceful: Donal saw this when he looked up at the sound of her

retreating steps. He did not speculate much on the cause of her strange behavior ; he only thought she need not have run away as if he was something dangerous ; she might have passed him like any other servant of the house. There was no presumption even in Donal's imagination : he was so full of the realities that he was less affected by shows than any but a very few in the world. Besides he had had his sorrow and had learned his lesson. Perhaps some of my readers will think this the more wonderful seeing he was a poet ; but he was one of those few poets who have no weak longing after listening ears. The poet whose poetry is little to him without an audience, must indeed, whatever his poetry may be in the judgment of any audience, be but little of a poet in himself. The poetry that is no good to the man himself, cannot be much good to anybody. There are the song-poets and the life-poets : the one set are the man-poems, the other the God-poems. Sympathy is lovely and dear where it comes unsought ; but the fame after which so many would be, yea, so many real poets sigh, is but rubbish. Donal could sing his songs like the birds, content with the audience of any passing angel that cared to listen. On the lonely hill-sides he used to sing aloud, giving his songs their own musical form in full : but it was all to him such an outcome of merest natural necessity, that he never thought about it as a poor scribber for the public or for his own clique does—never thought about publishing. His reception by the world or any representative portion of it troubled him but little, because he was little troubled about himself. A look of estrangement on the face of a friend, or a look

of suffering on anything human, would at once and sorely affect him; but not the look of a disparaging thought on the face of a mere acquaintance or stranger, were that the loveliest woman he had ever seen. *God's time sets all right* was one of the main articles of his creed: why be troubled about a mere passing show?

I have made use of the incident for a text, wherefrom to set forth the character of Donal. Though never yet had a word passed between her and any one on the subject, Lady Arctura knew, as somehow everyone both in the castle and the town believed, that as was natural, the great desire of the earl was that she should marry his son, and so the property and the title be also again joined. To this neither she nor Lord Forgue had made any objection; though indeed how could either, if ever so much inclined, seeing the notion had never yet been mentioned to either? And from any sign on either side no one could have told whether it would be acceptable to either. They lived like brother and sister, apparently without much in common, and still less of misunderstanding. There might have been more likelihood of their taking a fancy to each other if they had seen a little less of each other than they did, though indeed they were but little together, and that never alone. Lord Forgue had never been to school. His father had sent him straight from home and tutor to St. Cross's, whence he had now returned with his degree, some love for general literature, and the desire to go to Oxford.

Very few visitors came to the castle, and then only to call — some of the gentry of the neighborhood, and occasionally one of the Perthshire branches of the

family. Lord Morven very seldom saw any one, his excuse being his health, which was constantly poor, and often caused him suffering. Simmons, the butler, was also his chief personal attendant, and when he was worst, no one else saw him.

CHAPTER VIII.

WHAT IT INVOLVED.

LADY ARCTURA was on terms of intimacy with Sophy Carmichael, the minister's daughter, to whom her father had poured out dissatisfaction with the character of Donal, and his indignation at his conduct: he ought to have left the parish at once! Whereas he had, against his decided wish, secured for himself the best, the only situation in it, leaving him no chance of warning his lordship against him! and certainly had he been heard before Donal appeared, and that notwithstanding the small weight Lord Morven would have laid on his recommendation, the character of Donal the minister was prepared to give would have been enough to prevent Lord Morven from desiring his services, for his lordship was no unbeliever, in the more modern use of the word. The more unjustifiably her father spoke against him, the more bitterly did Miss Carmichael regard him, for she was a good daughter, and looked up to her father as the wisest and best man in the parish; wherefore she very naturally repeated his words to Lady Arctura. She in her turn repeated them to her uncle; but he would not pay much heed to what she said. The thing was done! He had seen and talked with Donal, and liked him! The young man had him-

self told him of the clergyman's disapprobation. He would take the first opportunity of requesting him to avoid discourse upon religious subjects. And therewith he dismissed the matter, and forgot all about it. Anything requiring an effort of the will, or an arranging of ideas, or some thought as to the best way of doing it, his lordship could not, because he would not encounter. Nothing was to him of such moment that he must do it at once. Neither did Lady Arctura refer again to the matter: her uncle was not one to take liberties with — least of all to press to action. But she remained somewhat painfully doubtful whether she was not neglecting her duty, but she persuaded herself that she was waiting till she should have something to say to her uncle from her own knowledge against the tutor.

She could not satisfy herself as to what she was to conclude from his reading the Apocrypha: doubtless the fact was not to be interpreted to his advantage, for he was reading what was not the Bible, and when he might have been reading the Bible itself; and besides the Apocrypha was sham Bible and therefore, must be at least rather wicked. At the same time she could not drive from her mind the impressiveness both of the matter she had heard, and his manner of reading it — this chiefly because of the strong sound it had of judgment and condemnation in it, which came home to her, she could not have told how or why, except generally — because of her sins. For she was one of those — I think not very few — who from conjunction of a lovely conscience with an ill-instructed mind, are doomed for a time to much and serious suffering. In one very important particular

she was largely different from her friend Miss Carmichael — this namely, that the religious opinions of the latter — what she called her religious opinions were in reality rather metaphysical than religious, and bad either way — to which she clung with all the tenacity of a creature with claws, caused her no atom of mental discomposure whatever : perhaps that was in part, why she clung to them : they were as she would have them. She did not trouble herself about what God required of her, but would hold the doctrine that most certainly guaranteed her future welfare — which welfare consisted in going to a place she heard called heaven, and avoiding another they called hell. Her conscience toward God had very little to do with her opinions, and her heart still less. Her head on the contrary, or perhaps rather her memory, was considerably occupied with the matter ; for nothing had ever been by her regarded on its own merits — that is, on its own individual claim to truth, but only as a thing which, handed down by her church, must therefore be true. To support these she would search out text after text in her Bible, and press them into the service, whatever might be their natural predilections. Any meaning but that which the church of *her* fathers had given to any passage must be of the devil, and every man must be opposed to the truth who saw in that meaning anything but the true, whether the intelligible or not ! In very truth it was impossible Miss Carmichael should see any meaning but that, even if she had looked for it ; for she was as yet nowise qualified for discovering the truth, not being herself true or in love with the truth. What she saw and loved in the doctrines of her

church was not that truth even, but the church-assertion that was in them. Believing as a matter of course, that is, as much as she believed anything, that a man's state is decided to all eternity the moment the breath is out of his body, she could see, in the only passage she was able "on the spur of the moment" to adduce in support of it—"As the tree falleth so shall it lie," nothing less than a triumphant proof of the doctrine. No matter what the context: if it did not mean that, what could it mean? Whoever even questioned, not to say the doctrine, but the proving of it by that passage, was a dangerous person, and unsound concerning the inspiration of the Scriptures. But all the time neither her own acceptance of that or any other doctrine, nor her defence of it against gainsayers, made the slightest difference to her life one way or the other — as indeed how should it?

Such was the only so-called friend that Lady Arctura had — though not such as the friend so the friend; for the conscience and heart of the younger woman were alive and awake to a degree that boded ill either for any doctrine that would stint its growth, or else for the nature unable to cast them off. Miss Carmichael was a woman about six-and-twenty — a woman in all her wants like, alas! too many Scotch girls, long before she was out of her teens. Self-sufficient, assured, with hardly shyness enough for modesty, a human flower cut and dried, an unpleasant specimen, and by no means valuable from its scarcity. Handsome and hard, she was essentially and hopelessly a self-glorious Philistine; nor would she ever be anything better, till something was sent to humble her, though what spiritual engine would be equal to the

task was more than man might imagine. From her childhood she had had the ordering of all Lady Arctura's opinions: whatever Sophie Carmichael said, Lady Arctura never thought of questioning. A lie is indeed a thing in its nature unbelievable, but there is a false belief always ready to receive the false truth, and there is no end to the mischief the two then can work. The one awful punishment of untruth in the inward parts is that the man is given over to believe a lie.

Lady Arctura was in herself a gentle creature who shrunk from either giving or receiving a rough touch; but she had an inherited pride, by herself quite unrecognized as such, which made her capable both of hurting and being hurt. Next to what she had been taught to consider the true doctrines of religion, she respected her own family, which in truth had no other claim to respect than that its little good and much evil had been done before the eyes of a large part of many generations. Hence she was born to think herself distinguished, and to imagine a claim for the acknowledgment of distinction upon all except those of greatly higher rank than her own. This inborn arrogance was in some degree modified by respect for the writers of certain books, not one of them of any regard in the eyes of the thinkers of the age. Of the world's writers, beyond her Bible, either in this country or in any other, she knew nothing. Yet she had a real instinct, not only for what was good in morals, but for what was good in literature as well; and of those writers to whom I have referred she not only liked the worthiest best, but liked best their best things. I need hardly say they were all religious

writers ; for the keen conscience and obedient heart of the girl had made her very early turn herself towards the quarter where the sun ought to rise, the quarter where all night long gleams the auroral hope. Unhappily, as with most, she had not gone direct to the heavenly well in earthly ground — the very word of the Master himself. How could she? From very childhood her mind had been filled with traditionary utterances concerning the divine character and the divine plans — the merest inventions of men far more desirous of understanding what they were not required to understand, than of doing what they were required to do, of obeying what they were commanded to obey — whence their crude and false utterances concerning a God of their own fancy — in whom it was a good man's duty, in the name of any possible God, to disbelieve. And just because she was in a measure true, authority had an immense power over her. The very sweetness of their nature forbids such to doubt the fitness of the claims of others. She had had a governess of the so-called orthodox type, a large proportion of whose teaching was of the worst kind of heresy, for it was lies against him who is light, and in whom is no darkness at all ; her doctrines were so many smoked glasses held up between the mind of her pupil and the glory of the living God — such as she would have seen it for herself in time had she gone to the only knowable truth concerning God, the face of Jesus Christ. Had she set herself to understand him the knowledge of whom is eternal life, she would have neither believed these things nor taught them to her little cousin. Nor had she yet met with any one to help her to cast aside the doctrines of men

and lead her face to face with the Son of Man, the visible God. First lie of all she had been taught that she must believe so and so before God would let her come near him or listen to her. The old cobbler could have taught her differently; but she would have thought it altogether improper for her to hold conversation with such a man, even if she had known him for the best man in Auchars. She was in sore and sad earnest notwithstanding to do the thing that was required of her and to believe as she was told she must believe. Instead of believing in Jesus Christ, that is beginning at once to do what he said — what he told people they must do if they would be his disciples, she tried hard to imagine herself one of the chosen, tried hard to believe herself the chief of sinners. No one told her that it is the man who sees something of the glory of God, the height and depth and breadth and length of his love and unselfishness, not a child dabbling with stupid doctrines, who can ever be able to feel that. She tried to feel that she deserved to be burnt in hell for ever and ever, and that it was boundlessly good of God who made her so that she could not help being a sinner, to give her the least chance of escaping it. She tried to feel that, though she could not be saved without something she had not got, if she was not saved it would be all her own fault; while at the same time the God of perfect love could save her by giving her that something if he pleased, but he might not so please: — and so on through a whole miserable treadmill of contradictions. Sometimes she would feel for a moment able to say this or that she thought she ought to say, the next the feeling was gone, and she was miserable. Her

friend did nothing to lead her to her own calm indifference, nor could she have succeeded had she attempted it. But, though she had never known trouble herself, just because she had never been in genuine earnest, she did not find it the less easy to take upon her the rôle of her spiritual adviser, and give her no end of counsel for the attainment of the assurance that she was one of the saved. She told her truly enough that all her trouble came of want of faith ; but she showed her no one fit for believing in ; for to talk of God and Christ, is not necessarily to show them. Neither could she have shown the portraits of them that hung in her inner chamber would she at all more have shown anything worthy of being believed in — except indeed that no one can say anything about Christ without saying something that is true, and has a glimmer of hope in it. The misery is that the professional teacher of religion has for centuries practically so disbelieved in the oneness of the Godhead as to separate Father and Son so that innumerable hearts have loved the Son yet hated the idea of the Father : hated the Father they have not, for he that hath the Son hath the Father also. But I have undertaken a narrative, and not an attack on the serpents of hell ; but the same lies under the name of doctrines are still creeping about everywhere, though they do not now hiss so loud in the more educated circles, and I must set my foot on one when I can. The rattlesnake may bite after he is unable any more to rattle : and the weakness of every human heart breeds its own stinging things.

CHAPTER IX.

BIASED BY OPINION.

ALL this time, Donal had never again seen the earl but once or twice at a distance. He had never revealed any interest in, not to say anxiety as to how Davie was getting on. Lady Arctura on the other hand had been full of a more serious anxiety concerning him. Heavily prejudiced against the tutor by what she had heard from her friend, she naturally dreaded his poisoning the mind of her cousin, and causing in him the same active indifference, if one may use the phrase, towards religion as had manifested itself in his brother since last he came home from St. Cross's — superinduced by nothing he had heard there, but by the reading of certain books that had there fallen into his hands.

There was a small recess in the schoolroom — it had been a deep bay window, but from a certain architectural necessity arising from the decay of age, all the lights of it except one had been built up — and in this Donal was one day sitting with a book, while Davie was busy writing; it was past school-hours, but the weather did not invite them out of doors, and Donal had given Davie a poem to copy. Lady Arctura came into the room — as she had never done before since Donal came, and thinking he was alone, began to talk to the boy, supposing he was

“kept in” for some fault. She spoke in a low tone, and Donal, busy with his book, did not for some time even know that she was present; neither, when he did hear her—though again for some time not a word she was saying—did he suspect she fancied they were alone. But by degrees her voice grew louder, and presently these words reached him—

“You know, Davie dear, every sin, whatever it is, and we can’t live without sinning, for whatever is not of faith is sin—every sin deserves God’s wrath and curse, both in this life and that which is to come—for ever and ever, Davie dear! and if it hadn’t been that Jesus Christ gave himself to bear the punishment for us, God would send us all to the place of misery. It is for his sake, not for ours, that he pardons us.”

She had not ceased when Donal rose in the wrath of love, and came out into the light like an avenging angel.

“Lady Arctura!” he said, “I dare not sit still and hear such false things uttered against the blessed God.”

Lady Arctura started in dire dismay, but in virtue of her breed and her pride recovered herself almost immediately, and called anger to her aid; what right had he to address her; she had not spoken; he ought to have been silent. And he dared assert his atheistic heresies to her very face! She drew herself up and said—

“Mr. Grant, you forget yourself!”

“I’m very willing to do that, my lady,” said Donal, “but I cannot forget the honor of my God. If you were a heathen woman I might think whether the

hour was come for enlightening you further ; but to hear one who has had the Bible in her hands from her childhood say such things about the God who made her and sent his Son to save her, without answering a word for him, would be cowardly !”

“What do you know about these things ? What gives you a right to speak ?” said Lady Arctura, who found her pride-strength already beginning to desert her.

“First,” answered Donal, “I had a Christian mother — have her yet, thank God — who taught me to love nothing but the truth ; and next, I have studied the Bible from my childhood, often whole days together, when I was out with the cattle and the sheep ; and best of all to give a right to speak, I have tried to do what the master tells me, almost from the earliest time I can remember. And I set to my seal that God is true — that he is light, and there is no darkness either of unfairness or selfishness or human theology in him, whatever the ministers and any others may falsely teach the people concerning him. I love God with my whole heart and soul, my lady.”

Arctura tried to say she too loved him so, but her conscience interfered, and she could not.

“I don’t say you don’t love him,” Donal went on, “but how you can, and speak and believe such things of him, I don’t understand. I daren’t hear them without saying that whoever taught them first was a terrible liar against God ; no man can lie *for* God, however he may try it, for God is lovelier than all the imaginations of all his creatures can think.”

Ere he finished the sentence Lady Arctura had turned and swept from the room, trembling from head

to foot. She could not have told why she trembled. But she was no sooner out of the room than she called Davie to come to her. Davie looked up in Donal's face, mutely asking whether he should obey her.

“Go to her,” said Donal. “I do not interfere between you and your cousin — only between her and her false notion of Jesus Christ's father.”

In less than a minute Davie came back, his eyes full of tears.

“Arkie says she is going to tell papa you are not fit to be my tutor. Is it true, Mr. Grant, that you are a dangerous man? I never thought it — though I have wondered you should carry such a big knife.”

Donal laughed.

“It was my grandfather's skeau dhu,” he said; “I mend my pens with it, as you know. But it is strange, Davie, that when anybody knows something other people don't know, they are so often angry with him, and think he wants to make them bad, when he wants to help them to be good.”

“But cousin Arkie *is* good, Mr. Grant!”

“I am sure she is. But she does not know so much about God as I do, or she would never say such things of him; we must talk about him more after this!”

“No, no, please, Mr. Grant! we won't say a word about him, for Arkie says except you promise never to speak of God to me, she will tell papa, and he will send you away.”

“Davie,” said Donal with solemnity, “I would not give you such a promise for the gift of this grand castle and all that is in it; no, I wouldn't to save your

life and that of everybody in it. For the master says, 'He that denieth me before men, him will I deny before my father in heaven;' and rather than he should do that, I would jump from the top of the castle. Why, Davie! would a man deny his own father or mother?"

"I don't know," answered Davie; "I don't remember my mother."

"But I'll tell you what," said Donal, with a sudden happy thought, "I will promise not to speak about God at any other time if she will promise to sit by when I do speak of him — say once a week. Perhaps we shall do what he tells us all the better that we don't talk so much about him."

"Oh, thank you, Mr. Grant! I will tell her," cried Davie, jumping up greatly relieved. "Oh, thank you, Mr. Grant," he repeated, "I could not bear you to go away. I should never stop crying if you did. And you won't say any naughty things, will you? for Arkie reads her Bible every day."

"So do I, Davie."

"Do you?" returned Davie. "I'll tell her that too, and then she will see she must have been mistaken."

Davie hurried to his cousin with Donal's suggestion. It threw her into no small perplexity — first from doubt as to the propriety of the thing proposed, next because of the awkwardness of it; then from a little fear lest his specious tongue should lead herself into the bypaths of doubt, and to the castle of Giant Despair — at which indeed it was a gracious wonder she had not arrived before. What if she should be persuaded of things she could not honestly disbelieve, but which yet it was impossible to believe and be

saved! She did yet see that those things she desired to believe were in themselves essential damnation. For what could there be in heaven or earth for a soul that believed in an unjust God? For a heart to rejoice in such a belief would be to be a devil of the worst sort, and to believe what it could not rejoice in, would be misery. No doubt a man may in a way believe wrong things not seeing that they are wrong, but that, while it frees him of the sin against the Holy Ghost, cannot keep him from the wretchedness of the mistake — from the loss of not knowing God as he is; for who can know him right while he believes wrong things about him? That good men do believe such things, only argues their hearts not yet united to fear him. They dwell on the good things they have learned about God, and forget the other things they have been taught, and forget with an admirable and divine success.

And what would Sophy say? Lady Arctura would have sped to her friend for counsel before giving any answer to the audacious proposal, but she was just then from home for a fortnight, and she must resolve on something. Then she bethought herself that it would be a very awkward thing to ask her uncle to take up the matter, especially as she was by no means sure how he would regard her interference, without being able to tell him something more definite about the young man's false doctrine; and she reflected also, that, as she was well grounded in argument, knowing all the doctrine of the Shorter Catechism, it was absurd to think she had anything to fear from one who but dabbled in theology in the strength of his own ignorant and presumptuous will, regardless of

the opinions of the great fathers of the Church, and believing only the things that were pleasing to his own unregenerate nature. She did not reflect that out of the mouths of the babes and sucklings it is that he will *perfect* praise. The spirit of the child is the spirit of Christ towards his father — the spirit of wisdom, therefore of knowledge. But this spirit finds itself happily but a miserable orphan when it puts its hope in men even the best and wisest; how much more when in men who are but the wretched shadows of thinkers themselves strongly imbued with the spirit of this world!

Lady Arctura would not say no; but she did not say yes; and after waiting for a week without receiving any answer to his proposition, Donal said to Davie,

“We shall have a lesson in the New Testament to-morrow; you had better mention it to your cousin.”

The next morning he asked him if he had mentioned it. The boy said he had.

“What did she say, Davie?”

“She said nothing, only looked strange.”

When the hour of noon was past and Lady Arctura had not appeared, Donal said,

“Davie, we’ll have our New Testament lesson out of doors; that is the best place for it.”

“That is the best place,” responded Davie, jumping up. “But you’re not taking your book, Mr. Grant.”

“Never mind; I will give you a lesson or two without book first. I have got it in my heart.”

But just as they were leaving the room, there was Lady Arctura with Miss Carmichael approaching it!

“ I understood,” said Arctura, with the more haughtiness that she desired to show her position unshaken, “ that you ” —

Here she hesitated, and Miss Carmichael took up the word.

“ — that you consented to our presence that we might form our own judgment on the nature of the religious instruction you give your pupil.”

“ I invited Lady Arctura to be present when I taught my pupil,” said Donal.

“ Then are you not going to give him a lesson ? ” said Arctura.

“ As your ladyship made me no reply, and school hours were over, I concluded you were not coming.”

“ And you would not give the lesson without her ladyship ? ” said Miss Carmichael. “ Very right.”

“ Excuse me,” returned Donal, “ we were going to have it out of doors.”

“ But you had agreed not to give him any so-called religious instruction but in the presence of Lady Arctura.”

“ By no means. I only offered to give it in her presence if she chose. There was no question of the lesson being given.”

Miss Carmichael looked at Lady Arctura as much as to say — “ Is he speaking the truth ? ” but if she replied it was in the same silent fashion. Donal knew Miss Carmichael by sight, but had never spoken to her, and had indeed never before seen her face distinctly. The handsome, hard-featured woman was dressed according to that wave of the tide of fashion that had reached Auchars. It was an ugly fashion, but so far as taste was free to operate that of Miss

Carmichael showed itself good — notably better than Lady Arctura's — not that Donal made any remark to himself in the matter. What he thought was that the lady had a keen, rather bold look. She was said to be engaged to a professor of theology, and I think it very probable, but I do not believe she had ever in her life been in love with anybody but herself. She was decidedly clever, but her cleverness made nobody a straw the happier; she was possessed of no end of assurance, but her assurance gave courage to no one, and took it from many; she had little fancy, and less imagination than any other woman I ever knew. But then she was a good theologian! — so good, that when she was by you could not get within sight of God for her theology and herself together. The divine wonder was, as I said before, that she had not yet driven such a delicate, truth-loving soul as Lady Arctura's mad.

Donal did not at all relish her interference. He had never said he would give his lesson before any one who chose to be present. That, he felt, would be far from fit. He could not at first see how to meet the difficulty. One thing only was plain: he could not turn back into the schoolroom, and sit down again, and begin. Without saying what he would do, he put his hand on Davie's shoulder, and walked toward the lawn, and the ladies followed. He tried to forget their presence, and be conscious only of that of his pupil and the master of them both.

“Davie,” he said, “how do you fancy the first lesson in the New Testament ought to begin?”

“At the beginning,” answered Davie, who had by this time learned to answer a question directly.

“But when a thing is perfect, Davie, it is difficult to say what is the beginning: show me one of your marbles.”

The boy produced from his pocket a pure white one, of real marble.

“That is a good one for the purpose,” said Donal, “very smooth and very white, with just one red streak in it! Now where is the beginning of this marble?”

“Nowhere,” answered Davie.

“If I should say everywhere?” suggested Donal.

“Ah, yes,” said the boy.

“But I agree with you that it begins nowhere.”

“It can’t do both.”

“Oh, yes it can: it begins nowhere for itself, but everywhere for us. Only all its beginnings are endings, and all its endings are beginnings.

“Look here! suppose we begin at this red streak: it is just there we should end again. That is because it is a perfect thing. Well, there was one who said ‘I am Alpha and Omega’—the first and last Greek letters, you know—‘the beginning and the end, the first and the last;’ and who can there be to begin about but him? All the New Testament is about him. Well, listen then as if you had never heard it before. A great many years ago, about fifty or sixty grandfathers off—you understand what I mean by that?—there appeared in the world men who said that a certain man had been their companion for some time and had just left them; that he was killed by cruel men, and buried by his friends; but, as he had told them before he would lay in the grave only three days, and rose from it on the third, and after a good while, during which they saw him several times,

went up into the sky, and disappeared. It wasn't a very likely story, was it?"

"No," replied Davie.

Here the two friends behind exchanged looks of horror. Neither spoke, but each leaned eagerly forward, fascinated in the expectation of yet worse to follow.

"But, Davie," Donal went on, "however unlikely it must have seemed to those who heard it, when you come to know the kind of man of whom they told it, you will see nothing could be more suitable than just what they said. And, Davie, I believe every word of it."

A ripple of content passed over Miss Carmichael's face, and then yielded again to that of listening.

"For, Davie," continued his tutor, "the man said he was the son of God, come down from his father to see his brothers, his children, his father's sheep, and take back home with him to his father any one who would go."

"Excuse me," here interrupted Miss Carmichael, with a pungent smile, "what he said was, that if any man believed in him, he should be saved."

"Run along, Davie," said Donal, "I will give you more of what he said in the next lesson. But don't forget what I have told you now."

"No, sir," answered Davie, and ran off to the stable. Donal lifted his hat, and would have gone towards the river. But Miss Carmichael, stepping forward, said:

"Mr. Grant, I cannot let you go till you answer me one question: do you believe in the atonement?"

"I do," answered Donal.

“Favor me, then, with your views upon it,” she said.

“Are you troubled in your mind on the subject?” asked Donal.

“Not in the least, thank God,” she replied, with a slight curl of her lip.

“Then I see no occasion for giving you my views. Nothing is more distasteful to me than talking about holy things in a mere analytical fashion.”

“But I insist.”

Donal smiled.

“Of what consequence can my opinions be to you, ma'am? or why should you compel a confession of my faith?”

“As the friend of this family, and the daughter of the clergyman of this parish, I have a right to know what your opinions are — not certainly for your own sake, but because you have a most important charge committed to you — a child for whose soul you will have to account.”

“For that and all things else I am accountable only to one.”

“To Lord Morven?”

“No.”

“You are accountable to him for what you teach his child.”

“I am not.”

“What! he will turn you away at a moment's notice if he learns what cannot fail to displease him.”

“Of course he can. I shall be quite ready to go — as ready as he to send me. If I were accountable to him that should never be.”

“I do not understand you.”

“If I were accountable to him for what I teach, I should of course teach only what he pleased. But do you suppose I would take any situation on such a condition? God forbid!”

“It is nothing to me, or his lordship either, I presume, what you would or would not do.”

“Then I can see no reason why you should detain me longer. Lady Arctura, I did not offer to give my lesson in the presence of any other than yourself. I will not do so again. You will be welcome, for you have a right to know what I am teaching him. If you bring another, except it be my Lord Morven, I will take David to my own room.”

With these words he left them, nor took any notice of a far from flattering remark of Miss Carmichael, uttered loud enough for him to hear as he went.

Lady Arctura was sorely bewildered. She could not but feel that her friend had not shown to the better advantage, and that the behavior of Donal had been dignified. But surely he was very wrong! what he said to Davie sounded so very different from what she heard at church, as well as from her helper, Miss Carmichael. It was a pity she had heard so little! he would have gone on if only Sophy had had patience and held her tongue! perhaps he might have spoken better things if she had not interfered! it would hardly be fair to condemn him upon so little! he had said that he believed every word of the New Testament—or something very like it!”

“I have heard enough!” said Miss Carmichael. “I will speak to my father at once.”

The next day Donal received from her a note to the following effect:

SIR: In consequence of what I felt bound to report to my father of the conversation we had yesterday, he desires that you will call upon him at your earliest convenience. He is generally at home from three to five.

Yours truly,
SOPHIE AGNES CARMICHAEL.

To this Donal immediately replied:—

Madam, notwithstanding the introduction I brought him from another clergyman, your father declined my acquaintance, passing me afterward as one unknown to him. From this fact, and from the nature of the report which your behavior to me yesterday enables me to divine you must have carried to him, I can hardly mistake his object in wishing to see me. I will attend the call of no man to defend my opinions, and your father's I have heard almost every Sunday since I came to the castle: I have been from childhood familiar with them.

Yours truly,
DONAL GRANT.

Not another word did he hear from either of them. When afterwards they happened to meet, Miss Carmichael took no more notice of him than her father.

But she impressed upon the mind of her friend that, if unable to procure his dismissal by her uncle, she ought to do what she could to protect her little cousin from the awful and all but inevitable consequences of his false teaching: if she was present when he mistaught him, he might perhaps be prevented from speaking such wicked things as he otherwise would, for it was plain he was ashamed to do so before her! Lady Arctura might even have some influence, if she would but take courage to reason with him, and show him where he was wrong! Or she might presently find things come to such a

pass that she could have no doubt her uncle would listen to her, and see the necessity of turning him away. She insisted that, as the place belonged to Lady Arctura, her uncle would not go dead against her will, but she did not understand that such a fact was just the thing to fetter the action of a delicate-minded girl like her. Continually haunted, however, with the feeling that she ought to do something, she found at least that she dared not absent herself from the lesson, however disagreeable it was to be present; that she *could* do, and therefore that she did. Upon the next occasion, therefore, she appeared in the schoolroom at the hour appointed, and with a cold bow, took the chair Donal placed for her.

“Now, Davie,” said Donal, “what have you done since our last lesson?”

Davie stared.

‘You didn’t tell me to do anything, Mr. Grant!’

“No, but did it come into your mind that what could I have given you the lesson for? Where is the good of such a lesson if it makes no difference to you! What was it I told you?”

Davie, who had never thought about it since, for the lesson had been broken off before Donal could bring it to its natural fruit, thought back, and said—

“That Jesus Christ rose from the dead.”

“I did tell you that! Now where is the good of knowing that?”

Davie was silent; he knew no good of knowing it. He would probably have made up something had he known how, but he did not. The Shorter Catechism, of which he had learned about half, suggested nothing. He held his peace.

“Come, Davie, I will try to help you: is Jesus dead, or is he alive?”

Davie considered.

“Alive,” he answered.

“What does he do?”

Davie did not answer.

“What did he die for? Do you know?”

Here Davie had a good answer, though a cut and dried one: “To take away our sins,” he said.

“Then what does he live for?”

Davie was again silent.

“Do you think if a man died for a thing, he would be likely to forget it the minute he rose again?”

“No, sir.”

“I should say he would just go on doing the same thing as before; therefore he lives to take away our sins. What are sins, Davie?”

“Bad things, sir.”

“Yes; the bad things we think, and the bad things we feel, and the bad things we do. Have you any sins, Davie?”

“Yes; I am very wicked.”

“Oh! How do you know that?”

“Arkie told me.”

“What is being wicked?”

“Doing bad things.”

“What bad things do you do?”

“I don't know, sir.”

“Then you don't know that you are wicked; you only know that Arkie told you so!”

Lady Arctura drew herself up, indignant at his familiar use of her name; but Donal was too intent to perceive the offence he had given.

“I will tell you,” Donal went on, “something you did wicked to-day.” Davie grew rosy red. “When we find out one wicked thing we do, it is a beginning, that is, if we put it right, to finding out all the wicked things we do. Some people would rather not find them out, but have them hidden from themselves and from God too. But let us find them out, every one of them, that we may ask Jesus to take them away, and help Jesus to take them away by fighting them with all our strength. There are bad things in you, Davie, worse than you can know yet; but I will tell you one thing: I saw you pull the little pup’s ears till he screamed out.” Davie hung his head. “And you stopped a while, and then did it again! So I knew it wasn’t because you didn’t know that it hurt it. Was that a thing that Jesus would have done when he was a little boy?”

“No, sir.”

“Why?”

“Because it would have been wrong.”

“I suspect, rather, it was because he would have loved the little pup. He didn’t have to think about its being wrong. He loves every kind of living thing; and he wants to take away your sin because he loves you — not merely to make you not cruel to the little pup, but to take away the wrong *think* that doesn’t love the little pup, and make you too love every living creature. Ah, Davie, you cannot do without Jesus!”

The silent tears were flowing down Davie’s cheeks.

“The lesson’s done, Davie,” said Donal, and rose and went leaving the boy with his cousin.

But just ere he reached the door, he turned with a sudden impulse, and said:

“Davie, I love Jesus Christ and his father more than I can tell you — more than I can put into words — more than I can think ; and if you love me you will mind what Jesus tells you.”

“What a good man you must be, Mr. Grant ! Isn’t he, Arkie ?” sobbed Davie.

Donal laughed aloud.

“What, Davie !” he exclaimed ; “you think me very good for loving the only good person in the whole world ! That is very odd ! Why, Davie, I should be the most contemptible creature, knowing him as I do, not to love him with all my heart — yes with all the heart I shall have one day when he has done making me !”

“Is God making you yet, Mr. Grant ?” I thought you were a grown-up man !”

“Well, I don’t think he will make me any taller,” answered Donal ; “but what is inside me, the thing I love you with, and the thing I think about God with, and the thing I love poetry with, the thing I read the Bible with — that thing God keeps on making bigger and bigger. I do not know where it will stop, but I know where it will not stop. That thing is *me*, and God will keep on making it bigger to all eternity, though he has not even got me into right shape yet.”

“Why is he so long about it ?”

“I don’t think he is long about it ; but I know he could do it quicker, if I was as good as by this time I ought to have been, with the father and mother I have had, and all my long hours on the hillsides with my New Testament and the sheep. I prayed to God on the hill and in the fields, and he heard me, Davie,

and made me see the foolishness of a great many things, and the grandeur and beauty of the true things. Davie, God wants to give you the whole world and everything in it, and when you have begun to do the things Jesus tells you, then you will be my brother, and we shall both be his little brothers."

With that he turned again and went.

The tears were rolling down Arctura's face without her being aware of it; for she was saying to herself, "He is a well-meaning man, but dreadfully mistaken; the Bible says believe, not obey!" The poor girl, though she read her Bible through and through regularly, was so blinded by the dust and ashes of her teaching that she knew very little indeed of what was actually in it. The most significant things slipped from her as if they were merest words without a shadow of meaning or intent; they did not support the doctrines she had been taught, and therefore said nothing to her. She did not know that the story of Christ and the appeals of those who had handled the word of life had a very different end in view from making people understand how it was that God arranged matters for their salvation from a terror of their imagining. God would have us live; if we live we cannot but know; while all the knowledge in the universe could not make us live. Obedience is the road to all things. It is the only way to grow able to trust him. Love and faith and obedience are sides of the same prism.

Regularly after that, Lady Arctura came to the lesson — always intending to object as soon as the lesson was over. But always before the end came, Donal had said something that went so to the heart of

the honest girl that she could say nothing. As if she too had been a pupil, as indeed she was far more than either knew, she would rise when Davie rose, and go away with him. But then she would go alone into the garden, or to her own room, where sometimes she would find herself wishing that the things were true which yet she vaguely counted very dangerous, seeing that through them Davie and she too might fail of escape from the wrath of a being who had poured out his very soul to deliver them, because she was not able to feel as she did her best to feel.

CHAPTER X.

MORE KNOWLEDGE.

THE great comforts of Donal's life, next to those of the world in which his soul lived — the eternal world, whose doors and windows are ever open to him who prays, were the company of his favorite books, the fashioning of his own thoughts into sweetly ordered sounds in the lofty solitude of his chamber, and his not infrequent communion with the cobbler and his Doory. But even to them he said nothing of what went on at the castle: he had learned the lesson the cobbler himself had given him. But many a lesson of greater value did he learn from the mouth of the philosopher of the lapstone. He who understands because he himself endeavors is a freed man of the whole realm of human effort. He who has no experience of his own, to him the experience of others is as a sealed book. The convictions that rose vaporous in him were rapidly condensed and shaped when he found, on opening any matter to his new friend that he thought likewise, but with the greater confidence of a longer acquaintance with truth.

But he also by-degrees made more and more of a companion of Davie, and such was the sweet relation between them that he would sometimes have him in his room even when he was writing. And when he

thought it time to begin to lay in his fuel for the winter to whom but Davie needed he apply to help him ?

“Up in this tower, Davie,” he said, “it would be impossible for me to work without a good fire, when the nights are long, and the darkness like solid cold. Mr. Simmons says I may have as much coal and wood as I like : will you help me to carry it up ?”

Davie sprang to his feet, as if he would begin that very minute.

“I shall never be able to learn my lessons if I am cold,” said Donal, who found he could not now bear a low temperature as well as when he was always in the open air.

“Do you learn lessons, Mr. Grant ?”

“Yes, indeed, I do,” replied Donal. “For I have found that one great help to the understanding of the best things is the brooding over the words of them as a hen broods over her eggs : the words are then thought eggs, and their chickens are truths ; and one great help to the brooding necessary is the learning of them by heart ; so I have set myself to learn, before the winter is over, if I can, the gospel according to John in the original.”

“What a big lesson !” exclaimed Davie.

“Ah, but how rich it makes me,” said Donal ; and that set Davie pondering.

They began to carry up the fuel together, Donal taking the coals, and Davie the wood. But Donal got weary of the time it took, and set himself to find a quicker way. With this in view, next Saturday afternoon, the rudimentary remnant of the Jewish Sabbath and the schoolboy's weekly carnival before Lent, he directed his walk, this time alone, to a small

fishing village, the nearest on the coast, about three miles off, a place of no great interest save wherein it resembled all other fishing villages. There he succeeded in hiring a spare boat-spar, with a block and a quantity of rope, which he carried home, not without some labor. His storing for the winter. The spar he ran out through a notch of the battlement over the parapet of the roof, near the sheds the butler had shown him, and having stayed it well back to one of the chimneys, rove his rope through the block at the peak of it, and lowered it with a hook at the end. A moment of Davie's help below, and a bucket filled with coals was on its way up. Happily this part of the roof was over a yard belonging to the household offices, and there Davie would stand and fill the bucket from the heap they had already got together below. "Stand back, Davie," Donal would cry, and then up went the bucket, to the unceasing delight of the boy. When it reached the block, Donal, by means of a guy, swung the spar round on its but-end, and the bucket reached the roof through the next notch of the battlement, when he would empty it, and send it down by its own weight to be filled again; and when Donal thought he had enough of coal, the wood had its turn. They spent thus an hour of a good many of the cool evenings of autumn, and Davie enjoyed it immensely; nor was it a small thing, with a boy delicately nurtured, to help him out of the feeling that he must have everything done for him; and when at length he saw the heap on the roof, he was greatly impressed with how much could be done by little and little. Then Donal told him that if he worked well through the week, every Saturday evening

he should spend an hour with him in his room, when they would do something together.

After his first visit to the village, Donal went again and again, for he had made the acquaintance of some of the people and liked them. Amongst them however was one who had seemed rather to keep aloof from him, although, attracted by his look despite of its apparent sullenness, he tried to draw him into conversation. But one day as he was walking home again, this man overtook him, and saying he was going in his direction thus tactitly offered his company—to the pleasure of Donal, who loved all humanity, and especially the portion of it that knew hard work. He was a middle-sized young fellow, with a slouching walk, but a well-shaped and well-set head, and now as soon as they began to understand each other, a frank utterance. He was brown as sun and salt sea winds could make him, with very blue eyes and dark hair, telling of Norwegian ancestry. He lounged along by the side of Donal, with his hands in his pockets, as if he did not care to walk, yet got over the ground as fast as Donal, who with yet some remnant of the peasant's stride, covered the road as if he meant walking. But after their greetings a great silence fell between them, which lasted till the journey was half-way over. Then the fisherman spoke.

"There's a lass at your hoose, sir," he said, "they ca' Eppie Comin."

"There is," answered Donal.

"Do ye ken the lass, sir—to speak to her I mean?"

"Surely," replied Donal. "I know her grandfather and grandmother well."

“Decent fowk they are!” said the lad.

“They are that!” responded Donal, “as good people as I know.”

“Would you like to do them a good turn?” asked the fisherman.

“Indeed I would!”

“Weel, it’s jist this, sir; I hae grit doobts gien it be gaein varra weel wi’ the lass at the castel yon’er.”

As he spoke he turned away his head, and spoke so low, and in such a muffled way that Donal could but just make out what he said.

“You must be a little plainer if you would have me do anything,” returned Donal.

“I’ll be plain eneuch wi’ ye, sir,” said the man; but then he fell silent as if he would never speak again. Donal waited, nor uttered a sound. At last the fisherman spoke once more.

“Ye maun ken, sir,” he said, “’at I hae had an unco fancy to the lass this mony a day; for ye’ll alloo she’s baith bonny and winsome!” Donal did not reply, for although he was ready to grant her beauty, he had never felt that she was winsome.

“Weel,” the man went on, “her an me’s been coortin’ this twa year; an’ guid freen’s we aye war till this last spring, whan a’ at ance she turnt highty-tighty like, nor could I ance get her to say what it was ’at had cheengt her to me: sae far as I kenned I had done naething, nor wad she say I had gien her ony cause o’ complaint. But still, though she couldna say ’at I had ever said mair nor a ceevil word to ony lass but hersel’, she appear unco wullin’ to fix me wi’ this ane or that ane or ony ane! I couldna think what had come ower her! But at last, an’ a sair last

it is — I hae come to the un'erstan'in o' 't; she wad fain hae some pretence for br'akin' wi' me, an' sae wad hae 'at I was doin' as she was doin' hersel' — haudin' company wi' anither!"

"Are you quite sure of what you say?" asked Donal.

"Ower sure, sir, though I'm no at leeberty to tell ye hoo I cam to hear o' 't.— Dinna think, sir, 'at I'm ane to haud a lass till her word whan her hert disna back it; I would ha' said naething about it, but jist borne the hert-brak wi' the becomin' silence, for gre'tin' nor ragin' men' no nets, and tak the life o' nae dogfish. But it's God's trowth, sir, I'm terrible feart for the lassie hersel'. She's that ta'en up wi' him, they tell me, 'at she can think o' naething but him — an' he's a great lord — no a puir lad like me — an' that's what fears me."

A great dread and great compassion laid hold of Donal, but he held his peace.

"Faith, gien it cam to that," resumed the man, "the fisher lad would win her better breid nor my lord; for gien a' tales be true an' he merry her, he'll hae to work for his breid; for the castel's no his, nor canna be 'cep he merry the leddy. But, alack, it's no merryin' her he'll be efter, or ony the likes o' 'im."

"Ye wouldna surely threip," said Donal, "'at there's onything atween her an' the young lord? It wad ill become me to hearken to idle havers o' the sort, bein' mysel' o' the hoosehold wi' the care o' his brither! She maun be an idle lass to tak siclike intil her heid!"

"I wuss weel she hae taen't intil her heid; she'll get it the easier oot o' her hert! But deed, sir, I'm

sair feart! I speak na o' 't for my ain sake; for gien there be trowth intil't, there can never be mair atween her and me! But, eh, sir, the peety o' 't wi' sic a bonny lass gien he didna mean fair by her! 'Thae gran' fowk does fearsome things! It's no won'er whiles the puir fowk rises wi' a roar, and tears doon a', as they did i' France!"

"All you say is quite true; but the charge is such a serious one!"

"It's ane at I dinna doobt, sir. But I'm no gaein' to mak it afore the warl'."

"You are right there: it could do no good."

"I fear it may du as little whaur I am gaen to mak it; I'm upo' my ro'd to gar my lord gie an accoont o' himsel'. Faith gien it bena a guid ane, I'll thraw the neck o' 'im. It's better me to hang, nor her to gang disgraced, puir thing!—though she can be naething mair to me. But I wad like the wringin' o' a lord's neck! It wad be like the killin' o' a shark!"

"Why do you tell me this?" asked Donal.

"Because I look to you to get me to word o' the man."

"That you may wring his neck? You should not have told me your design. If you were to wring his neck, I should be art and part in the murder."

"Wad ye hae me lat the lassie tak her chance ohn dune onything?" said the fisherman with scorn.

"By no means. I would do something myself, now I know of it, whoever the girl was, and she is the granddaughter of my best friends."

"Sir, ye winna surely fail me!"

"I tell you I will help you somehow, but I will

not do as you ask me. You might spoil everything. I will turn the thing over in my mind. I promise you I will do something — what, I cannot say all at once. You had better go home again, and I will come to you to-morrow.”

“Na, na, that winna do!” said the man, half doggedly, half fiercely. “The hert’ll be oot ’o my body gien I dinna du something. This verra nicht it maun be dune! I canna bide in hell ony langer. The thought o’ the rascal slaverin’ his lees ower my Eppie’s jist killin’ me! My brain’s like a fire: I see the verra billows o’ the ocean as reid as blude.”

“If you come near the castle to-night I will have you taken up. I am too much your friend to want to see you hanged! But if you go home and leave the matter to me, I will do my best, and let you know. She shall be saved if I can compass it. We must not revenge anything. What, man! you would not have God against you?”

“He’ll be upo’ the side o’ the richt, I’m thinkin’.”

“Doubtless; but he has said ‘Vengeance is mine!’ He can’t trust us with that. He won’t have us interfering. It’s more his concern than yours yet, that his lassie have fair play. I will do my part.”

They walked on again in gloomy silence for some minutes. Suddenly the fisherman held out his hand to Donal, grasped his with a convulsive energy — was possibly reassured by the strength with which Donal’s responded — turned, and without another word went back.

Donal had to think. Here was a most untoward thing! What could he do? What ought he to attempt? From what he had seen of the young lord,

he could not believe he intended any wrong to the girl; he might be selfishly amusing himself! was hardly one to reflect that the least idle familiarity with her was a wrong! The thing, if there was the least truth in it, must be put a stop to at once! But it might be all a fancy of the justly jealous lover, to whom the girl had not of late been behaving as she ought. Or might there not be somebody else? At the same time there was nothing absurd in the idea that a youth, fresh from college and all at once isolated at home, seeing next to nobody, possessed by no very overpowering love of literature, and with almost no amusements he cared for within his reach, should if only for very *ennui* first be attracted by the pretty face and figure of Eppie, and then enthralled by her inoffensive coquetries of instinctive response. True or not, there was danger to the girl either way: if there was nothing in the thing, the very supposition was an injury; it would even suggest what it was intended to frustrate. Still something must be risked! He had just been reading in Sir Philip Sydney, that "whosoever in great things will think to prevent all objections, must lie still and do nothing." And what was he to do? The readiest and simplest thing of course!—go to the youth himself, tell him what he had heard, and ask him if there was any ground for it. Whether there was or not, would it not be better to find the girl another place? In any case distance must be put between them. He would tell her grandparents as soon as possible; but he feared they had no very great influence with her. But, if the whole thing was a mistake, might they not manage to make it up

between her and her fisherman lover, and have them married offhand? She might only have been teasing him?—Yes; he would speak to the young lord! and yet again, what if he should actually put the mischief into his thoughts! if there should be ever so slight a leaning in the direction, might he not by such an interference give a sudden and fatal impulse? Should he take the housekeeper into his counsel? She ought to understand the girl! the least hint of the report, even had she as yet suspected nothing, might from her meet at once with corroboration, or strong disproof. Things would at once show themselves to her on the one side or the other, and might cast light on the path he ought to take. On the other hand he did not know Mrs. Brooks well enough to tell whether she would be prudent, or spoil everything by precipitation. She might ruin the girl's future if she acted without sympathy, and cared only to get the evil out of the house. The way the legally righteous act the policeman in the moral world would be amusing were it not so sad. They are always making the evil "move on," driving it, like the gypsies, to do its mischiefs to other people instead of them; dispersing nests of the wicked to crowd them more, and with worse results, in other parts; but they would be shocked at the idea of sending out of the world those to whom they will not give a place in it to lay their heads. "Get rid of wickedness," is their thought; they have no notion that their duty is to do what they can to cure it. It were no wonder that such should believe in a God who, they said, cast the sinner who had not repented by a certain undefined day, into a Tartarus of fire, to add to the

howling mass of wickedness which he kept forever in activity by the exercise of his free will and for his own glory. With the bright lamp of their intellect such theologians cast a shadow of God against the wall of the universe, and then believe in the shadow.

Donal was still in meditation when he reached home, and still undecided as to what he should do. He was crossing a small court among the offices on his way to his own aerie, when he saw the house-keeper making signs to him from the window of her room. He turned and went to her. It was of Eppie she wanted to speak to him. How often is a discovery of a planet, of a truth, of a scientific fact, made all at once in different places far apart! She asked him to sit down, got him a glass of milk, which was his favorite refreshment, little imagining the expression she attributed to fatigue with his walk arose from the very thing now occupying her own thoughts and causing her anxiety.

“It’s a queer thing,” she began, “for an auld wife like me”—she was not much over forty—“to come til a yoong gentleman like yersel’, sir, wi’ sic a tale; but, as the sayin’ is, ‘needs maun whan’—ye ken the lave, sir! Here’s like to be an unco stramath aboot the place, gien we comena thegither upo’ some way oot o’ ’t. Dinna luik sae scaret like, sir, for we may be in time yet er’ the warst come to the warst, though it’s some ill to say what might be the warst in sic an ill-coopered kin’ o’ affair! There’s thae twa fules o’ bairns—’deed they’re nae better! an, the ane’s jist as muckle to blame as the tither—only of coorse the lass is waur to blame nor the lad bein’ made sharper, an’ kennin’ better nor him what

comes o' sic gaein's on. Eh, but she *is* a gowk!"

Here Mrs. Brooks paused for a time, lost in contemplation of the gowkedness of Eppie.

The housekeeper was a florid, plump, good-looking woman, with thick auburn hair, brushed smooth on each side from the hair-shed in the middle — one of those comely women in soul as well as body, who are always to the discomfiture of wrong, and the healing of strifes. Left a young widow, she had refused many offers, for she thought she had done all that was required of her in the way of marriage. She had found her husband at least good enough not to have another wished in his place, and marriage hard enough to favor the same conclusion. The moment she sat down, smoothing her apron on her lap, and looking one in the face with clear blue eyes, he must have been either a suspicious or an unfortunate man who would not trust her. She was a general diminisher of shocks, foiler of encounters, and softener of angers. She was among her acquaintance what certain arrangement with springs is at the end of a railway carriage: I may not use the name of the thing, because it is already unworthily appropriated. She was not one of those of her class who are always dressed in black silk and lace, but was mostly to be seen in a cotton gown, very clean, but by no means imposing. She would put her hands to anything, to show a young servant how a thing ought to be done, or to relieve any one from cook to housemaid who was ill or had a holiday. Donal had *taken to* her, as like do to like. He did not now hurry her, but waited.

"I may as weel gie ye the haille story, sir," she recommenced, "an' syne ye'll be whaur I am mysel'.

“ I was oot i’ the yard to luik efter my hens — I never lat onybody but mysel’ meddle wi’ them, for they’re jist as easy sp’ilt as ither fowks bairns ; an the twa doors o’ the barn bein’ open, I took the straucht ro’d throuw the same to win the easier at my feathert fowk, as my auld minnie used to ca’ them. Weel, ye see, I’m but a saft kin’ o’ a cratur, as my father used to tell me, an’ mak but little din whaur I gang, sae they couldna hae h’ard my fut as I gaed ; but what sud I hear — but I maun tell ye it was i’ the gloamin’ last nicht, and I wad hae tellt ye the same this mornin’ sir, seekin’ yer fair coonsel, but ye was awa afore I kennt, an’ I was resolv’t no to lat anither gloamin’ come ohn taen precautions : what sud I hear, I say, as I was sayin’, but a laich tshe — tshe — tshe, somewhaur I couldna tell whaur, as gien some had mair to say nor would be spoken oot afore the warl’ ! Weel, ye see, bein’ ane accoontable tae ithers for them ’at’s accoontable to me, I stude still an hearkent : gien a’ was richt, nane wad be the waur for me, an’ gien a’ wasna richt, a’ sud be wrang gien I could mak it sae. Weel, as I say, I hearkent — but eh, sir ! Jist gie a keek oot at that door, an’ see gien there bena somebody there hearkin’, for that Eppie — I wadna lippen til her ae hair ! She’s as sly as an edder ! Naebody there ? Weel, steek ye the door, sir, an’ Is’ gang on wi’ my tale. I stude an’ hearkent as I was sayin’, an’ what sud I hear but a twasome toot-moot, as my auld auntie frae Aberdeen wad ca’ it, ae voice that o’ a man, an’ the ither that o’ a woman, for it’s strange the differ even when they baith speyk their laichest ! I was aye gleg i’ the hearin’, an’ hae reason for the same to be thankfu’,

but I couldna, for a' my sharpness, mak oot what they war sayin'. So, whan I saw 'at I wasna to hear, I jist set aboot seein' whether I couldna see, for that was the neist readiest ro'd to the truth o' the thing. So as quietly as my saft fit, for it's mair saft nor licht, wad carry me, I gaed aboot the barn floor, luikin' whaur onybody could be hidden awa!

'Noo there was a great heap o' strae in ae corner, no that hard again' the wa'; an' 'atween the tae wa' an' that heap o' threshen strae, sat the twa. An' up gat my lord wi' a spang, as gien he had been taen stealin'—as maybe he was, and maybe he wasna; I canna tell. Eppie wad hae hidden whaur she was, or creepit oot like a moose ahint my back, but I was ower sharp for her, an' had her like ony cat; an' says I, 'Na, na, my lass! yes' no win awa' that gait!' 'Oh, Mrs. Brooks!' says my lord, unco ceevil, as I canna say but he's aye been, 'don't be hard upon her.' Noo that a kin' o' angert me jist! For though I say the lass is mair to blame nor the lad, it's no for the lad, be he lord or laborer, to lea' himsel' oot whan the blame comes. An' says I, 'My lord,' says I, 'ye oucht to ken better! Is' say nae mair i' the noo, for I'm ower angry. Gang yer ways—but na! no the-gether, my lord! Is' luik weel to that.—Gang up til yer ain room, Eppie!' I said, 'an' gien I dinna see ye there whan I come in, it's awa' to your Grannie I gang this verra nicht.'

"Eppie, she gaed; an' my lord he stude there, wi' a face 'at glowert white throuw the gloamin'. I turned upon him like a wild beast, an' says I, 'I winna speir what ye mean, my lord, but ye ken weel enough what it luiks like! an' I wad never hae

expeckit o' ye!' He began, an' he stammert, an' he beggit me, to believe there was nae mischeef 'atween them, an' he wadna harm the lassie to save his life, an' a' the lave o' 't, an' I couldna i' my hert but pity them baith — they war twa sic bairns, an' doobtless drawn thegither wi' oot thought o' ill, ilk ane by the bonny face o' the ither, as is but nait'ral, though it canna be allooed. An' he beseekit me sae sair 'at I foolishly promised no' to tell his faither gien he on his side wad promise no' to hae onything mair to do wi' Eppie. An' that he did. Noo I never had reason to doot the young man's word, but in a case o' this kind it's aye better no' to lippen ower muckle. An' ony gait, the thing canna be left this way, for gien ill was to come o't, whaur wad we a' be? I didna promise no to tell onybody; I'm free to tell yersel', Mr. Grant; an' ye maun jist contrive what's to be dune."

"I will speak to him," said Donal, "and see what humor he is in. That may help to clear up to us what we ought to do. It's always best to do nothing but the best."

"Ay, that's true, sir — gien only a body kenned what the best was."

"Of course we can do but as it seems to us; but if we want to do right, we may hope to be kept from doing wrong."

"I houp sae, sir. We hae muckle need!" responded Mrs. Brooks.

After a question or two more, Donal went to go to his room: but he had not reached the top of the stair, when he saw as clearly as possible that he must speak to Lord Fergie at once: he turned and went

down again, and straight to the room where the brothers generally sat together. It was called Lord Forgue's room. Lady Arctura was very seldom with them; for a family in which there was rarely a quarrel, it was as little united as could well have been imagined — the reason being that the head of it held himself alone, seldom issuing from his own apartment.

When he reached the room, only Davie was there, poring over a worn folio — worn by fingers that had been dust for centuries. He asked him if he knew where his brother was. He answered that he went out a little while before, and would not let him go with him. Donal hurried down to Mrs. Brooks.

“Do you know where Eppie is?” he asked.

“Is she not in the house? I will go and see.”

She returned in no small perturbation.

“This is her day for gaein' to see her fowk,” she said. “It had come to be luikit upon as sic a settled thing, 'at she gaed o' hersel' whan the time cam, without speirin' onybody's leave. But gien she be gane there as usual, it says the better for her.”

Donal at once made up his mind to follow her to the cobbler's.

The night was pretty dark, but the moon would be up by and by. He walked rapidly to the town, but saw no one on the way. When he reached the cobbler's house he found him working as usual, only indoors now that the weather was colder, and the light sooner gone. He looked as innocent, bright, and contented as ever. “If God be at peace,” he would say to himself, “why should not I be?” Once he said this aloud, almost unconsciously, and

was overheard: the consequence was that he was regarded by many, especially the most worldly church-goers, as an irreverent, yes, blasphemous man; they did not know God enough to understand the cobbler's words, and all the interpretation they had to give them, was of course of their own kind: Their long Sunday faces indicated their reward; the cobbler's cheery, expectant look indicated his—for he was ever hastening to the glory to be revealed. The couple was wondering a little that young Eppie had not made her appearance; but then, her grandmother said, she had often, especially during the last few weeks, been later still. Donal was very uneasy, not knowing where to seek her, yet restless to protect her, when he heard a light, hurried foot on the stair. "Here she comes at last!" said her grandmother, and she entered with the look of one that had been running. She said she could not get away so easily now. Said Donal to himself, "If you have begun to lie, things are going very ill with you!" but he did not say that he had left the house after her. After sitting a few minutes, she rose suddenly, saying she must go, for she was wanted at home. Donal rose also and said, as the night was dark, and the moon not yet up, it would be as well if they went together. At this her face flushed, and she began to murmur an objection: she had to go into the town first, to get something she wanted! Donal said he was in no hurry and would go with her. She cast an inquiring, almost suspicious look upon her grandparents, but made no further objection, and they went out together. They walked to the High street, and to the shop where Donal had encountered the parson, and went in

together. Eppie bought one or two little things of the sort men call finery, because they do not wear such themselves, and then looked timidly at Donal — either to indicate that she was ready to go, or to inquire what mood he was in towards her — perhaps whether there was any chance of her being able to get rid of him. Leaving the shop, they walked back the way they had come, little thinking, either of them, that their every step was dogged. Kennedy the fisherman, although firm in his promise not to go near the castle, could not remain quietly at home, but, knowing it was Eppie's day for visiting her folk, had gone to the town, and was lingering about in the hope of seeing her. Not naturally suspicious, justifiable jealousy had rendered him such; and when he saw the two together he began to ask whether Donal's anxiety to keep him from encountering Lord Fergue might not be due to other grounds from those given or implied. So he followed, careful they should not see him, lest so he should shut the door of knowledge against himself.

When they came to the baker's shop, Eppie, in a voice that in vain sought to be steady, asked Donal if he would be so good as wait for her in the street a moment, while she went to speak to Lucy Leper, the baker's wife. Donal made no difficulty, and she went in, to find the loaf on as she found it.

Lowrie Leper's shop was lighted with only one dip, too dim to show much even of the penny loaves in the window, and the sugar biscuits and the peppermint drops that made it all day as good as a peep-show to the hungry eyes of the children now mostly closed in bed. A pleasant smell of bread came from it, and did what it could to entertain him as he waited

in the all but deserted street. While he stood no one entered or issued.

“Eppie’s holding a long talk with Lucy Leper!” he said to himself, but waited without impatience a long time longer. He began at length to fear she must have been taken ill, or have found something wrong in the house that required her help. When more than half an hour was gone, he thought it time to go into the shop to make inquiry.

He did so. There was no one there. He shut the door and opened it to ring the spring-bell, then mechanically closed it again. Mrs. Leper came from somewhere behind to see what the squall of the shrill-tongued summoner might mean. Donal asked her if Eppie was ready to go. She stared at him.

“Eppie wha?” she said at length.

“Eppie Comin,” he answered.

“I ken naething about her — Lucy!”

A good-looking girl with a stocking she was darning drawn on one hand and arm, followed her mother into the shop.

“Whaur’s Eppie Comin, gien ye please?” repeated Donal.

“I ken naething about her. I haena seen her sin’ this day week,” answered the girl in a very straightforward manner.

Donald saw he had been tricked, and judging it prudent to seek no elucidation, turned with apology to go.

When he opened the door, there came through the house from behind a blast of cold wind, which enabled him at once to understand: there must be an open outer door in that direction! Seeing no one,

the girl had slipped through the house, and out again by the back door, leaving her troublesome squire to cool himself with vain expectancy in the street! I fancy she hoped she had found another admirer: but his polite attentions being just then inconvenient, she had not scrupled so to get rid of him.

Donal made haste to the road home — for in that direction lay now, so far as he could tell, his only chance of falling in with her once more.

But she had tried the trick once too often, for on a similar occasion she had served her fisherman in like fashion. Still following them, and seeing her go into the baker's, Kennedy conjectured at once her purpose, and hurrying to the issue from the other exit, saw her come out of the court, and again followed her.

As Donal hastened homeward, the moon rose. It was a lovely night. Dull-gleaming glimpses of the river came through the light fog that hovered over it in the rising moon, like a spirit-river continually rising from, and resting upon the earthly one, but flowing in heavenly places. The white webs shone very white in the moon, and round it the green grass looked gray. But he had not gone far, before nearly the whole country was covered with a low-lying fog, on whose upper surface the moon shone, and made it appear to his wondering eyes the wide-spread lake of an inundation, from which rose the half submerged houses and stacks and trees. One who had never seen the thing before, and who did not know the country, would never have doubted that he looked upon a veritable expanse of water. Absorbed in the beauty of it, he trudged on. Suddenly he stopped: was it sounds of lamentation he heard on the road

before him? He could see no one! At the next turn, however, and in the loneliest part of the way, something dark was lying, like the form of a man. He ran to it. The moon gleamed on a pool beside it, with color-hiding light. A pale death-like face looked heavenwards from the earth; it was that of Lord Forgue—and without breath or motion. There was a cut in his head, from which the pool had flowed. He examined him with anxious gaze. The wound had stopped bleeding. What was he to do? What could be done for him there in the middle of the road? There was but one thing! He drew the helpless form to the side of the way, and leaning it up against the earth-dyke, sat down on the road before it, and so managed to get it upon his back, and rise with it. If he could but get him home unseen! Much scandal might be forestalled! He got on very well with him on the level road, but, strong as he was, he did not find it an easy task, so laden, to climb the steep approach to the castle, and had little breath left when he reached the final platform on which the great towering hulk stood.

He carried him straight to the housekeeper's room. It was not yet more than half-past ten o'clock: and though the servants were mostly in bed, Mrs. Brooks was still moving about. He laid his burden on her sofa, and hastened to find her.

Like a sensible woman she kept her horror and dismay to herself, and expressed them only in haste to help. She got some brandy, and they managed to make him swallow a little, and then he began to recover. They bathed his wound, and did for it what they could with sticking plaster, then carried him to

his own room, and got him to bed. Donal sat down beside him, and staid there. He was restless and wandering all the night, but towards morning fell into a sound sleep, and was still asleep when the housekeeper came to relieve his attendant.

Then first Donal heard of Eppie. As soon as Mrs. Brooks left him with his patient, she went to her room, and found her in bed, pretending to be asleep, and had left her undisturbed, thinking she would come easier at the truth if she took her unprepared to lie. It came out afterwards that she was not so heartless as she seemed. She found Lord Forgue waiting her upon the road, as she had expected. A few minutes after, Kennedy came up to them. Forgue told her to run home at once and not to say a word: he would soon settle matters with the fellow. She went off like a hare, and till she was out of sight the two men stood looking at each other. Kennedy was a powerful man, and Forgue but a stripling: the latter trusted, however, to his skill, and did not fear his adversary. What passed between them Donal never heard. Forgue did not even know who his antagonist was.

The next day he seemed in no danger, and his attendants agreed that nothing should yet be said about the matter. It was given out that his lordship would be confined to his room for a few days, but nothing was said in explanation. His father would never miss him, and as to his cousin, their relation to each other was such as to hinder any familiarity there might otherwise have been between them, brought up as they had been, more like brother and sister than cousins. I do not know how much either of them

regarded their marriage as a thing settled; but neither of them liked the idea for its own sake at least. That Forgue gave it no entertainment I cannot say; for such avarice as the prospect awoke finds ready place in the heart of even a young man with as yet no expensive habits.

The next day, in the afternoon, Donal went to see if he could fall in with Kennedy, loitered a while about the village, and made several inquiries after him; but no one had seen him.

His lordship 'recovered as rapidly as could have been expected. Davie was sorely troubled that he was not allowed to go and see him, but Donal did not wish it yet for he would have been full of question and remark and speculation. But, for his own part, Donal was but waiting to perform it until his lordship should be strong enough to endure without injury the excitement of being taken to task.

CHAPTER XI.

AN ALTERCATION.

AT length one evening, Donal knocked at the door of his room, and went in. Forgue was seated in an easy chair before a blazing fire, looking very comfortable, and showing in his habitually pale face no sign of a disturbed conscience.

“My lord,” said Donal, “you will hardly be surprised to find I have something to talk to you about !”

His lordship was so much surprised at the address that he made him no answer — only looked silent in his face. Donal went on.

“I want to speak to you about Eppie Comin.”

Forgue’s face flamed up. The devil of pride, and the devil of fear, and the devil of shame, all rushed to the outworks to defend the worthless self. But his temper did not at once break bounds.

“Mr. Grant,” he said, “I should have thought it hardly necessary to remind you that, although I have availed myself of your superiority in some branches of study, I am not your pupil, and you have no authority over me.”

“The reminder is perfectly unnecessary, my lord,” answered Donal. “I am not your tutor, but I am the friend of Andrew Comin and his wife, and therefore, so far as may be, of Eppie.”

His lordship drew himself up yet more erect in his chair, and there was now a sneer on his handsome, and generally sweet-looking face. But Donal did not wait for him to speak.

“Don’t imagine, my lord,” he said, “that I am presuming on the fact that I had the good fortune to come up in time to take you on my back and carry you home: that I should have done for your lordship’s stable-boy had I found him in similar plight. But just as I interfered for you then, I am bound to interfere for Eppie now. Not that she is in worse danger than you, for the danger of *doing* a mean and wicked action is a far worse danger than that of suffering it, whatever be the consequences.”

“Damn your insolence!” burst out the young man, rising to his feet. “What right have you to speak so to me? Do you think because you are going to be a parson, you may make a congregation of me, whether I please or not?”

“I have not the slightest intention of being a parson,” returned Donal quietly, “but I do hope to be an honest man—which your lordship is in great danger of ceasing to be.”

“Damn you, get out of my room,” cried Fergie.

Donal took a seat opposite him.

“Then, by heaven! if you do not,—I—I will,” said Fergie, with a failure.

He rose, and was moving towards the door, but ere he reached it, Donal was standing with his back against it. He locked it and took out the key. The youth glared at him. He could not speak for fury. He turned and caught up a chair. To think of a clodhopper interfering between him and any girl! He

must be in love with her himself : He rushed at him with the chair. One twist of Donal's ploughman hand wrenched it from him. He threw it over the youth's head upon the bed, and stood motionless and silent, waiting till the first of his lordship's rage should subside. In a few minutes he saw his eye begin to quail. He went back to his chair.

"Now, my lord," said Donal, following his example and sitting down, "will you hear me?"

"I'll be damned if I do!" he answered, flaring up again at the first sound of Donal's voice.

"I'm afraid you'll be damned if you don't," returned Donal.

But his lordship had taken the babyish and undignified expedient of thrusting his fingers in his ears. Donal sat quiet until he had removed them. But the moment he began to speak he thrust them in again. Donal rose, and seizing one of his hands by the wrist, and removing it, said,

"Take care, my lord ; if you drive me to extremities, I will speak so that all the house shall hear me ; and if that will not do, I will go straight to your father, and let him know the whole matter between us."

"A tell-tale, of course ! a sneaking spy and a tell-tale !"

"I will hold no terms with such a man any more than I would with vermin among my poultry," said Donal.

This drove the youth into a fresh passion, but Donal sat coldly waiting till the futile outburst was over. It was presently exhausted, and the rage seemed to go out for want of fuel. Nor did he again

resort to the stopping of his ears against the truth he was doomed to hear.

“I am come,” said Donal, “to warn your lordship. Do you not know the course you are pursuing is a dishonorable one?”

“I ought to know what I am about better than you.”

“Perhaps so; but I doubt it: you have no mother, my lord; I have had mine all my life. For her sake, if for no other, I should scorn to behave to a woman as you are doing now.”

“What do you imagine I am doing now?”

“There is no imagination in this — that you are behaving to a young woman as no man ought except he meant to marry her if she would have him.”

“How do you know I do not mean to marry her?”

“Do you mean to marry her?”

“What right have you to ask?”

“For my own sake if for no other; I live under the same roof with you both.”

“What if she knows I do not intend to marry her?”

“Then my duty is equally plain; I am the friend of the only relatives she has, therefore her friend — and her keeper.”

“I have heard before of your intimacy with that old atheist!” said Forgue with a scornful laugh.

“The man,” said Donal, “to whom I believe our Lord would go first were he to visit Auchars.”

“As he went home with the publican of Jericho? Ha! Ha!”

“Precisely so; he was probably the most honest man in the city.”

“Come! come! don't talk such rubbish to me!”

“If it be rubbish to you it is life-blood to me. For my part, if I did not do my best for the poor girl, I dared not look my Master in the face — Where is your honor, my lord?”

“I never told her I would marry her.”

“I never supposed you had.”

“Well, what then?”

“I repeat, such attentions as yours must naturally be supposed by any innocent girl to mean marriage.”

“Bah! she is not such a fool.”

“Is she fool enough, then, not to know to what they point?”

“How can I tell? They say she is an innocent girl.”

“And you take advantage of that innocence — to — let us say, amuse yourself with her?”

“What if she is not such an innocent girl as you would have her?”

“My lord, you are a scoundrel.”

“A scoundrel!”

“I used the word, my lord.”

For a moment it seemed as if the youth would break out into a fresh fury; but a moment and he laughed instead — not a nice laugh.

“Come now,” he said, “I'm glad I've succeeded in putting you in a rage; I've got over mine! I'll tell you all about it. There is nothing between me and the girl — nothing whatever, I give you my word except an innocent flirtation. Ask herself.”

“My lord,” said Donal, “I believe what you mean me to understand; it is just what I supposed. I thought nothing worse of it myself.”

“Then why the devil do you kick up such an infernal shindy about it?”

“For these reasons, my lord”—

“Oh, come! don’t be long-winded.”

“You must hear me.”

“Go on; I’m submissive.”

“I will suppose she does not imagine you mean anything you would call serious with her.”

“She can’t.”

“Why not?”

“She’s not a fool, and she can’t imagine me such a blazing idiot!”

“But may she not suppose you love her?”

He tried to laugh.

“You have never told her so? — never said or done anything to make her think so?”

“Oh, well! she may say so to herself — after a sort of fashion.”

“Is she likely to call it love of such sort herself? Would she speak to you again if she heard you talking so of the love you give her?”

“You know as well as I do the word has many meanings.”

“And which is she likely to take — that which is confessedly false and worth nothing?”

“She may drop it when she pleases.”

“Doubtless. But in the meantime will she not take your words of love for far more than they are worth?”

“She says she knows I will soon forget her.”

“She might say to herself all the contemptuous things you have now said of your relation to her, but would that keep her from being so in love with you as

to cause her misery? you don't know what the consequences may be of her loving you with a love awakened by yours but infinitely stronger!"

"Oh, women don't die nowadays for love!" said his lordship, feeling a little flattered.

"It would be well if some of them did! for they never get over it. She mayn't die, true! but she may live to hate the thought of the man that led her to think he loved her, and so taught her to believe in nobody. The whole life of the woman, even without any wrong on her part, may be dark with misery because you would amuse yourself."

"She has her share in the amusement! and I take my share, by Jove, in the danger! She's a very pretty, sweet, clever, engaging girl—though she is but a housemaid!" said Forgue with a flare, standing up for the oppressed, and uttering a sentiment of quite communistic liberality.

"What you say only shows the more danger to her. You must have behaved to her so much the more like a genuine lover. For your so-called danger, my lord, I cannot say I have much sympathy. Any suffering *you* may have will hardly persuade you to the only honorable escape."

"By Jove," cried Forgue: "you don't dream of getting me to marry the girl! That's coming it rather strong with your friendship for the cobbler!"

"No, my lord; if things are as you have said, I have no such desire. I will let your father know when circumstances drive me so far as that. What I do want is to put a stop to the whole affair. Every man has to be his brother's keeper; and if our western notions concerning women be true, a man must

be yet more bound to be his sister's keeper. A man who does not recognize this, be he earl or prince, is as vile as the murderous prowler after a battle. For a man to say she can take care of herself, is to speak out of the essence of hell. The beauty of the love of which he keeps falsely talking to her, is that it does not take care of itself, but of the person beloved. That man, I say, even though he mean her no ruin, is perilling her future, and acting the part of a mean, sneaking devil ; I do not call him a cur, because I have too much respect for dogs, having known and honored them from my childhood to dishonor the worst of their names upon such a man. To make love to a girl in any such fashion is a mean scoundrelly thing, and it has already brought on you some of the chastisement it deserves."

His lordship started to his feet in a fresh access of rage.

"You dare tell me to my face that I had a thrashing !"

"Most assuredly, my lord. The fact stands just so."

"I gave him as good as he gave me."

"That is nothing to the point — though from the state I found you in I can hardly believe it. Pardon me, I do not mean you behaved like what you call a coward, or took your punishment without defending yourself."

Lord Fergue was almost crying with rage.

"I have not done with him yet !" he stammered. "Tell me who the rascal is, and if I don't make of him what he made of me, may" —

"Stop, stop, my lord. All that is entirely useless.

I will not tell you who the man is. However little I may approve of his way of settling differences, and I speak with some authority, having received blows from you without returning them, I so strongly feel he gave you no more than you deserved, that I will take no step whatever to have the man punished for it."

"We shall see! You make yourself art and part with him!"

Donal held his peace.

"You will not tell me the villain's name?"

"No."

"Then I will find it out and kill him."

"That he may do first. He threatened to kill you. I will do what I can to prevent it. Shall I inform the police? Would you have the whole affair come out?"

"I will kill him," repeated Fergue through his clenched teeth.

"And I will do my best to have you hanged for it," said Donal, perhaps hastily, but anxious to stop the whole affair.

"Leave the room."

"When you have given me your word that you will not speak again to Eppie Comin."

"I will not."

"Then she will be sent away."

"Where I shall see her the easier."

His lordship said this more from perversity than intent, for he had begun to wish himself clear of the affair—only how was he to give in to this unbearable clown!

"I will give you till to-morrow to think of it," said Donal, and opened the door.

His lordship made him no reply, but cast after him

a look of anger and fear, which Donal, turning his head at the moment as he shut the door behind him, saw. He smiled.

"I trust," he said, "you will one day be glad I have spoken to you as I have."

"Oh, go along with your preaching!" said Forgue, more testily than wrathfully; and Donal went.

In the meantime Eppie had soundly been taken to task by Mrs. Brooks, and told that if once she spoke a word to Lord Forgue, that very day she should have her dismissal. I suspect she called her a good many names, with which my story has nothing to do, and anyhow thought she had succeeded in impressing upon her that she was in the greatest danger of losing her situation with circumstances that must affect her character. Then she assured Donal that she would not let the foolish girl out of her sight, whereupon Donal thought it better to give Lord Forgue a day to make up his mind.

On the second morning he came to the schoolroom just as lessons were over, and said frankly:

"I've made a fool of myself, Mr. Grant. Make what excuse for me you can. I am sorry for my thoughtless behavior. Believe me, I meant no harm. I have quite made up my mind there shall be nothing more between us."

"Promise me you will not once speak to her again."

"I don't like to do that — it might happen to be very awkward. But I promise to do my best to avoid speaking to her — except where it might be awkward."

Donal was not quite satisfied, but thought it best to leave it so. Forgue seemed entirely in earnest, and such a promise might result awkwardly.

For a time Donal remained in doubt whether he should mention the thing to Eppie's grandparents. He reflected that their influence with her did not seem very great, and if she came to be vexed with anything they said, it might destroy what little influence they had. Then it would make them unhappy, and he could not bear to think of it. He almost made up his mind that he would not mention it, but, in the hope that she would now change her way, leave the done to be forgotton. But he had no sooner thus resolved than he grew uncomfortable, and was unsatisfied with the decision. So, all was not right between his friend and him. Andrew Comin had now something against him! He could no longer meet him as before; he was hiding something from him! He had a right to reproach him! Then his inward eyes grew clear. He said to himself:

“What a man has a right to know, I have no right to conceal. If sorrow belong to him, I have as little right to keep that from him as joy. God and his sorrows and his joys are the man's inheritance! What a fool I am! My wisdom to take care of this man! His own is immeasurably before mine! The whole matter concerns him: I will let him know at once!”

The same night he went to see him. His wife was out, and Donal was glad of it. He told him all that had taken place. The old man heard him in silence with his eyes fixed on him, his work on his lap, his hand with the awl hanging by his side. When he heard how Eppie had tricked Donal that night, leaving him to wait for her in vain, a tear gathered in each of the old eyes. He wiped them away with the backs of his horny hands, and not another followed.

When Donal ended, saying he had first thought he would say nothing to him about it, he was so loath to trouble them, but neither his heart nor his conscience would leave him at peace, the little believer spoke: — “Ye did richt to tell me,” he said. “It’s verra true we haena that muckle weicht wi’ her, for it seems a kin’ o’ a law o’ natur ’at the yoong’s no to be hauden doon by the experrience o’ the auld — which efter a’, *can* be experrience only to themsel’s. But whan we pray to God, it seems it puts it in God’s pooer to mak use o’ ’s for the carryin’ oot o’ the thing we pray for; we kenna hoo, but sae it seems to be; an’ God can work throu’s w’cot oor kennin’ hoo. It’s no aye by the words he gies us to say; wi’ some fowk words gang for unco little; it may be whiles by a luik o’ whilk ye ken naething yersel’; or it may be whiles by a muv o’ yer han’, or a turn o’ yer v’ice or yer heid, whaur na attention’s paid to the word ye say. Wha kens but ye may hae a divine pooer ower the hert ye hae maist gien up the houp o’ winnin’ at! Ye hae h’ard o’ the convic’ ’at was broucht to sorrow by seein’ a bit o’ the same kin’ o’ mattin’ ’at was upo’ the flure o’ the aisle o’ the kirk his mither used to tak him til? That’s a stroke o’ God’s magic! There’s me kennin’ what God can do nor yet what best o’ rizzons he has for no doin’ ’t sooner! Whan we think he’s lattin’ the time gang by an’ doin’ naething, he may be jist doin’ a’ thing. But I never think like that noo, lat him do as he likes. I’m o’ his min’ whether I ken what his min’ is or no.—Eh, my lassie! my lassie! I could better win ower a hantle nor her deceivin’ o’ you, sir, that gait. It was sae dooble o’ her! It indicates naething wrang

in itsel' 'at a yoong lass sud be taen wi' the attentions o' a bonny lad like Lord Forgue. That's no again' the natur 'at God made! But to preten' an' deceive! — to be cunnin' an' sly! It luiks ill — it luiks ill! An syne for the ither lad — eh, that's warst o' a', I doobt! I kenna hoo far she had committit hersel' wi' him, for she was never ready to lat's share in her thochts an' w'ys. Eh, sir! It's a fine thing to hae nae secrets but sic as lie 'atween yersel' an' yer macker! It's no aither 'at ye want to keep *them* secret; for God an' a' them 'at 's in him belongs to his. I can but pray the Father o' a' to haud his e'e upo' her, an' his airms aboot her, an' haud aff the hardenin' o' the hert 'at despises coonsel. I'm sair doobtin' we canna do muckle mair for her oorsel's twa. She maun tak her ain gait, for we canna put a collar roon' her neck, an' lead her aboot wi' 's whaur ever we gang. She maun win her ain bried; an' gién she didna that, she wad be but the mair taen up wi' sic like nonsense as the like o' Lord Forgue's aye ready to say til ony bonny lass. I verily believe she's safer there wi' you and the housekeeper to luik efter her, nor gién she war some ither gait whaur he could win at her easier, and there wad be nane wad tak trouble wi' her — mair nor jist to say, gang aboot her business, whan she wasna to their min'. Fowk's unco jalous about their hoose 'at wad trouble themsel's little aboot a lass! Sae lang as it's no upo' their premises, she may do as she likes for them! Doory an' me we'll jist lay oor cares i' the fine sicht an' the lovin' hert o' the Maister, an' see what he can do for's! He kens we maun be concernt about sic things! but aiven sic we can lea' to him! He'll

maybe lat's see something we should do, or he may do the nesessar thing ohn made use o' us, I houp there'll be nae mair bluedshed ! He's a fine lad, Steenie Kennedy — come o' a fine stock. His father was a fine, God-fearing man — some dour by natur, but wi' an unco clearin up throu grace. I wad willingly hae seen oor Eppie his wife, for he's an honest lad. I'm sorry he gied place to the ill ane, and tuik things until the han o' violence, but he may hae repentit by this time, an' troth, I canna blame him muckle at his time o' life. It's no as gien you or me did it, ye ken, sir."

"It is true!" thought Donal, "what would be very wrong in one to do, may be more than pardonable in another of inferior spiritual development. There is an ignorance God winks at, as the old translators make it. It needs but time and discipline to remove it! He himself both takes and gives time for the things he most desires, else would he never have made the world. I wonder if any one really acts up to his lights! Some are certainly following their light, coming nearer to it, and growing better."

Surely the chosen agonize after the light; stretch out their hands to God; stir up themselves to lay hold upon God! These are they in the forefront, who gather, like the mountain tops the dews, grace to send down upon their fellows below. They are the few chosen; the rest are the many called, who had indeed to be compelled. Alas, for the one cast! As Donal was going home in the dark of a clouded moonlight, just as he reached the place where he found Lord Fergie, he saw the figure of a man apparently waiting for some one. He put himself a little

on his guard and went on. It was Kennedy. When he knew Donal, he came up to him in a hesitating way, revealing, as it seemed to Donal, some shame even in the way his legs moved, though his walk was still the fisherman's slouch.

"Kennedy," said Donal, for the other seemed to wait for him to speak first, "you may thank God you are not now hiding from the police."

"I wad never hide frae them, sir. Gien I had killed the man, I wad hae hauden my face til't. But it was a fulish thing o' me to do, for I see noo it'll but gar the lass think the mair o' him; they aye side wi' the ane they tak to be ill-used."

"I thought ye said ye wad, in any case, hae nae mair to do wi' her!" said Donal.

Kennedy was silent for a moment, then murmured,

"A body may tear their hert oot, but gien it winna come, what's the guid o' sweirin' oot it maun?"

"Weel," said Donal, "it may be some comfort to you to know that, for the present at least, and I hope for altogether, the thing is put a stop to. The house-keeper at the castle knows about it, and we will both do our best. Her grandparents know too. She and Lord Forgue have both promised there shall be no more of it. And I do believe, Kennedy, there has been nothing more than great silliness on either side. I hope, whatever turn up, you will not forget yourself again. You know you gave me a promise and then broke it!"

"No i' the letter, sir, only i' the speerit!" returned Kennedy. "I gaed na near the castel."

"Only the speerit! said ye man?—a queer *only*

that!—man, what matters the word but for its help to win at an' haud by an' do the speerit o' a thing? The verra Bible lats the word gang ony time for the sake o' the speerit! Do ye think I wad hae coontit it a breach o' yer promise gien ye had gane up to the castel upo' some message o' mercy to the man ye maist-han' murdered? Ohn gane near't?—I tell ye this: gien ever ye lay han' upo' the lad again, an' onything serious come o' 't, I'll do my best to gie ye over to justice. Haud ye a quaiet souch, an' I'll do my best for ye. Trust me to the extent of my ability, which mayna be little or may be mair." Kennedy promised to govern himself, and they parted friends.

The old avenue of beech-trees, leading immediately nowhither any more, but closed at one end by a built-up gate, and at the other by a high wall, between which two points it stretched quite a mile, was a favorite resort of Donal's, partly for its beauty, partly for its solitude. The arms of the great old trees meeting and crossing from the opposite sides, made of it a long aisle, its roof a broken vault of leaves, upheld by irregular pointed arches, which worked on one's imagination like an ever-shifting dream of architectural suggestion; and, having ceased to be a way, it was now all but entirely deserted. There was not a little of eeriness in the vanishing visita that showed nothing beyond; and when the wind of the twilight was sighing in gusts through its moanful crowds of fluttered leaves; or when the wind of the winter was tormenting the ancient haggard boughs, and the trees looked as if they were weary of the world, and longing after the garden of God in the kingdom of the tree of life; yet more when the snow lay heavy upon

all their branches, and sorely tried their aged strength to bear up against its oppression, giving the onlooker a vague sense of what the world would be if God were gone from it, then the old avenue was a place from which any one with more imagination than courage would be ready to haste away, and seek the abodes of the live souls which alone make the world habitable to each other. But Donal, though he dearly loved his neighbor, and that in the fullest concrete sense, was capable of loving the loneliest places because he was never alone. His soul was peaceably in company with the soul of the universe even all the time he was not thinking of that soul, or consciously conscious of his presence either in the world around him, or the world which was himself.

It was altogether a neglected place. Long grass grew all over its floor from end to end, cut now and then for hay, or to feed such animals as had grass in their stalls, but often quite untended. Along one border, on the outside of the trees, went a footpath, but so little used that, although not quite invaded by the turf, the long grass met over the top of it, and thus it was often hid almost entirely. Though Donal had once met Lady Arctura in it, the place was no favorite haunt of hers, and she was never there for any love of the place itself. So finding it so utterly lonely, Donal was growing more and more fond of using it as his outdoor study, and *proseuche* for was it not a little aisle of the great temple? Very seldom indeed was his reading or meditation interrupted by even the sight of human being.

It was about a month after he had taken up his abode at the castle, when, as on a day he was lying in

the grass with a book-companion, under the shade of one of the largest of its beeches, he felt ere he heard the sounds of the feet of an approaching horse. When they had come almost close, he raised his head to see. The movement startled a spirited horse, whose rider nearly lost his seat, and did lose his temper. Recovering the former, and pulling up the excited animal, fain to be off at full speed, he urged him towards the cause of his terror. In his wrath he took Donal for a tramp, waiting for the night and its fitnesses. At the moment Donal was rising — deliberately, that he might not further alarm the horse : he was hardly on his feet when the animal came almost straight at him, its rider with his whip raised, just as Donal took off his bonnet to make his apologies. He stepped a little aside, and stood erect and uncovered. His bearing and countenance calmed the horseman's rage, for there was something in them no gentleman could fail to recognize, while the steady composure which rarely forsook him, tended in itself to calm any agitation in another.

The rider was a gentlemanlike man — plainly one who had more to do with affairs bucolic than those of cities or courts, but withal a man of conscious dignity, socially afloat, and able to hold his own.

“What the devil” — he cried — for nothing is so irritating to a horseman as to come near losing his seat, except perhaps to lose it altogether, and indignation against the cause of any untoward accident is generally a mortal's first feeling, for, however foolishly, he feels himself injured.

“But there, having better taken in Donal's look, he checked himself, and thereupon Donal spoke.

"I beg your pardon, sir," he said; "it was foolish of me to rise so hastily; I might have thought it would startle many a horse. But one can't always have one's wits about one, especially when his thoughts are absorbed."

Donal was apt to be a little long-winded for the busier part of the age into which he was born, but the fault seldom did any harm, and not unfrequently did good, for it gained time, which, with people both reasonable and unreasonable, is a great gain, especially when there is wrath in the wind. He had been in such a place born, and was so educated, that he was old-fashioned, and belonging to a time when everything moved more slowly, when sermons were very long, and conversation deliberate, when people thought more, spoke less, and took time to say what they were thinking. The gentleman lifted his hat.

"I beg your pardon for being so hasty," he returned with a smile which cleared away every cloud from his face. "I imagine, from what I have heard of him, you must be the tutor at the castle, with as good a right to be here as I have myself."

"You are right, sir," returned Donal.

"Pardon me that I forget your name."

"My name is Donal Grant," replied Donal, with an accent on the *my* intending a desire to know in return that of the speaker, for he on his part was attracted by the bearing and behavior of the man.

"I am a Graeme," answered the other, "one of the clan, and factor to the earl. Come and see where I live. My sister will be glad to make your acquaintance. We lead rather a lonely life here and don't see too many agreeable people."

“You call this lonely, do you!” said Donal. “It’s a grand place, anyhow.”

“You are right — as you see it now. But wait till the winter comes! Then perhaps you will change your feeling about it a little.”

“I have seen a few winters, and know something of what they can be,” returned Donal. “Pardon me if I doubt whether you know winter so well as I do. This east coast is by all accounts a bitter place, but I fancy it is only upon a great hillside that you can know the heart and soul of a snowblast. One who has been a shepherd off and on, ought to know something about it.”

“I give in,” returned Mr. Graeme. “It is bitter enough here though, and a mercy we can manage to keep warm in-doors.”

“Which is often more than we shepherd-folk can do,” said Donal.

As they talked Donal had picked up a book or two from his lair, and they were now walking along together. Mr. Graeme used to say afterwards he was never so immediately taken with a man. It was one of the charms of Donal’s habit of being, that he never spoke as if he belonged to any other than the social position in which he had been born and brought up. This came partly from pride in his father and mother, partly from inborn dignity, and partly from religion. To him the story of our Lord was the reality it is in itself — so much a reality that he delighted to think he was born so nearly on the same level of earthly position as the Master of his life and aspiration. For if ever man had an ambition — I give the evil name of the world’s kind to the passion I mean — it was

Donal's ambition to be made free with the freedom which is our natural inheritance, and shall be gained by those who obey the words of the Master. To gain this freedom of absolute being was to Donal the one thing worth seeking; and from this fled every kind of pretence as from the face of the light flies the darkness. Hence he was entirely and thoroughly a gentleman, and that not only in the one worthy sense of the word, but in the world's sense as well — at least so far as regarded even the world's essentials. What if his clothes were sometimes far from being of even the next to the newest cut? What if any one could see at once that he had not been used to London society? He did not trouble himself about such things; he was far above them. If he might but attain to the manners of the court of the "high countries," manners which appear on the outside because they go all through the man, he did not mind what he seemed in the eyes of men. Courteous, ready to help, considerate, always seeking first how far he could honestly agree with any speaker, opposing never except sweetly and apologetically, save indeed when some utterance of flagrant injustice was in his ears, there was no man of true breeding, in or out of "society," who would not at least have yielded the point that Donal, so far as manners went, was fit company for any man or woman. Mr. Graeme's eye glanced from the back of his horse over the tall, square-shouldered form, a little stooping from lack of drill and much meditation, but instantly straightening itself upon any inward stir; and he said to himself, "This is no common man! There must be something *in* him, and probably to be got out of him."

They were walking along the avenue, Donal by the rider's near knee, talking away as those not unlikely soon to know each other well.

"You don't seem to make much use of this road," said Donal.

"No; its use is an old story now. The castle was for a time deserted, and the family, then poorer than it is now, lived in the house you are going to honor with a visit — to my mind much the more comfortable of the two, though considerably too large for us."

"What an old house it must be if these trees were planted for an approach to it!"

"They were never planted for that; they are much too old. Either there must have been a wood here at the time, and the rest were cut down and these left, or there was a house here before much older than the present. The look of the garden indeed, and of some of the outhouses, would bear out the idea."

"I have never seen the house," said Donal. "I cannot think where it can be."

"You can't then, have been going much about," said Mr. Graeme.

"That is true. I have been so taken up with my pupil, and so delighted with my nearer surroundings, that I have not cared to stir much beyond them — except, indeed, to go and see Andrew Comin, the cobbler."

"You know him, do you? I have heard him spoken of as a quite remarkable man. There was a clergyman here from Glasgow — I forget his name — so struck with him as to seem actually to take him for a prophet. I remember he said he belonged to the

old mystics — not that it conveyed much to me, or served to recommend him to me. I have no turn for extravagances of any sort — least of all religious.”

“But,” said Donal in the tone of one merely suggesting a possibility, “a thing that from the outside may seem an extravagance, may look quite different when you get inside it.”

“The more reason for keeping out of it! If it be so bewitching that acquaintance with it must make you in love with it, the more air between you and it the better!”

“Would not that keep you from ever forming a true acquaintance with anything? Nothing can be known from merely hearing what people say.”

“True; but there are things that are so plainly nonsense!”

“Yes; but there are other things that seem to a man nonsense, because he thinks he knows what they are when he does not. Who would know anything of the shape of a chair who took his notion of it from its shadow on the floor? What idea could a man have of religion who knew nothing of it except from what goes in churches?”

Mr. Graeme was not fond of going to church, yet did go, and was the more pleased to hear the unfavorable remark. This and other reasons caused him to make no reply, and the subject dropped.

As they approached the end, the avenue seemed to Donal to stop dead against a high wall, but when they reached it, he saw that the road turned at right angles, and skirted the wall for some distance, then turned again with it. The wall was a somewhat dreary one — of gray stone, with mortar as gray —

not like the rich-colored wall of old red brick one would expect in such a place in England. But its roof-like coping was crowned with tufts of wall-plants, and a few lichens did something to relieve the grayness. Having taken its second turn, the road soon brought them to a farmyard—that of the home-farm at which the factor lived. Mr. Graeme left his horse at the stable, and led the way to the house. They entered it by a back door with a porch overgrown with ivy, and going through some low passages came to the other side of the house, where Mr. Graeme showed Donal into a large, low-ceiled drawing-room, with old-fashioned furniture, smelling of ancient rose-leaves, whose odor seemed rather that of sad hearts than of withered flowers. There he left him while he went to find his sister. Glancing around him Donal saw a window open to the ground, and went to it. Beyond it lay what seemed to him the most fairy-like garden he had ever beheld. He had in books come on descriptions of such a garden, and though he had never looked on such before, he seemed to know it well from times of old. It was all laid out in straight lines, with soft walks of old turf between the plots, and in the plots grew all kinds of straight things, whose ambition seemed to be to get up, not to spread abroad. He stepped out of the window, drawn as if by the sight of a long retreated, almost forgotten country of his childhood's dreams. Down a broad walk, on which his foot sank deep in velvety grass, he went wandering, and the loveliness of the dream did not fade. Hollyhocks, so gloriously impatient of development that their flowers could not wait to reach the top ere they burst into the flame

of life, making splendid blots of color along their ascending stalks, received him like stately dames of enchantment, and enticed him, ever to see more and more of them, down the long walk between the two rows of them, deep red, and creamy white, primrose and yellow; and all the while below the present pleasure lay the dim assurance that they were leading him to some wonderful place, some nest of lovely dreams, if not more lovely visions. The walk itself led to a bower of roses—a bed surrounded with a trellis, on which they climbed, and made a huge bon-fire, incense altar, rather, of red and white flame. To Donal it seemed more glorious than his brain could receive. Herein seeing was hardly believing, but believing was more than seeing, and would ripen to a higher sight. Donal well understood that though nothing can be too good to be true, there is nothing that is not too good to be grasped. Poor misbelieving birds of God, we hover about a whole wood of the trees of life, venturing here and there a peck, as if their fruit might be poison, and the design of our creation was our ruin: we shake our wise owl-feathered heads and declare they cannot be the trees of life, because that is too good to be true. Ten times more consistent are they who deny there is a God at all than they who fancy they believe in a middling kind of a God, in whom they place indeed a fitting faith. Feelings such as these moving gently in his full heart, among flowers that came from the dark earth like the exhaled spirits of its hidden jewels which themselves could not reach the eye of the sun; over grass which fondled his feet like the lap of an old nurse, he walked slowly once round the bed of

the roses, to return again towards the house. But when he reached the bottom of the walk, there, half way between him and the house, was the lady of the garden descending to meet him — not ancient she like the garden, but young like its flowers, light-footed, strong and full of life. Prepared by her brother to be friendly with the stranger, she met him with a pleasant smile, and he saw that the web of light which shone out of her dark eyes had in it a woof of laughter. She had a complexion, dark and sweet ; as I have said, a merry eye ; a good large forehead ; a nose by no means after any recognized generation of noses, yet a pleasant nose to meet ; a mouth not insignificant — larger indeed than to human judgment might have seemed necessary for the purposes generally regarded as those of the mouth — although those purposes may surely well be imagined to go beyond eating and drinking, talking and smiling, and kissing. Large indeed, it was yet a right pleasant mouth to look upon, and the two rows of lovely teeth it was furnished with, not looking at all dangerous, Donal saw its approach without dismay. He was no more shy with women than with men : while his feeling towards them partook not a little of the reverence of the ideal knight-errant of the old time. He felt no more fearful in the presence of the most distinguished of them he ever met than he would have been in the presence of an angel of God ; for all his courage came of his truth, and clothed in the dignity of his reverence he could look in the face of the lovely without shame. He would never have sought like Adam to hide from him whose voice was in the garden, but would have hastened to him to cast him-

self at his feet. Bonnet in hand he advanced to meet her. She came up to him, holding out a well-shaped, good-sized hand, strong and not ignorant of work — capable indeed upon occasion of milking a cow to the animal's entire satisfaction. Then he saw too that her chin was strong, and her dark hair not too tidy. She was rather tall and slenderly conceived, though plumply carried out. Her light approach pleased Donal much. He fancied her foot pressed the grass as if it loved it: if Donal was ready to love anything in the green world, it was neither roses nor hollyhocks, nor even sweet peas, but the grass that is trodden under foot, that springs in all waste places, and is glad of the dews of heaven to heal the hot cut of the scythe. Long had he abjured the notion that there is anything in the whole vegetable kingdom without some feeling of life and its enjoyment. He never liked to pluck a flower except to carry to some one who would be made happier by the sight of it: he was all but certain the flower felt the change.

He took her hand in his and felt it an honest one — a safe, comfortable hand.

“My brother told me he had brought you,” she said. “I am glad to see you.”

“You are good to me,” said Donal. “I should not have thought either of you had known of my existence. I confess till a few minutes ago, I was not aware of yours.”

Was it a rude speech? He was silent for a moment with the silence that premises speech, then added —

“Has it ever struck you how many born friends

there are in the world who never meet — people who would love each other at first sight, but who never in this world gain that first sight ? ”

“No,” returned Miss Graeme with a laugh in which humor predominated. “I certainly never had such a thought. I take those that come, and do not think of the rest. But of course you are right: it must be so.”

“It is like having a great many brothers and sisters you do not know,” said Donal.

“My mother once told me,” she rejoined, “of a man whose father had had so many wives and children that he positively did not know all his brothers and sisters.”

“I suspect,” said Donal, “we *have* to know our brothers and sisters.”

“I do not understand.”

“We have even got to feel a man is our brother the first moment we see him,” pursued Donal, enhancing his former remark.

“That sounds rather alarming!” said Miss Graeme with another laugh, in which again humor not merriment predominated. “My poor little heart feels scarcely large enough to receive so many.”

“The worst of it is,” continued Donal, who once started was not ready to draw rein; the things he thought much about he was ready to talk much of: out of the abundance of his heart his mouth spoke “—the plague is that those who have mostly advocated this extension of the family bonds, have generally begun by loving their own immediate relations less than they ought to love everybody. Extension with them has meant slackening—as if any one

could learn to love more by loving less, and go on to do better without doing well! That which is intensest at the core must of course alone be able to spread farthest. He who loves his own little will not love others much if at all."

"But how can we love those who are nothing to us?" said Miss Graeme.

"That would be impossible. The family relations are there to develop the love which is founded on a far deeper though less recognized relation. They can only enable us to love what is lovable. But pardon me, Miss Graeme. Meeting you for the first time, I immediately monopolize the conversation, as if I were your tutor as well as little Davie's."

"I am very glad to listen," returned Miss Graeme. "I cannot say I am prepared to agree with you; but it is something in this out-of-the-way corner, to hear even talk from which you must differ."

"Ah, you can have that here as well as anywhere!"

"Indeed! I am sure it is not in the pulpit."

"For my part I hear little else from the pulpit. I spoke of talk from which you would differ, but with which I think you ought to agree. There is an old man in the town who can talk better than ever I heard man speak before, but as he is a poor wise man, with a despised handicraft, almost none heed him—as is natural to this world. But almost no community recognizes its great men till they are gone. The strongest influences are from their very nature of the most hidden working. They are deep out of sight."

"Where is the use then of being great?" suggested Miss Graeme.

“That depends on what the use of greatness is. The desire to be known of men is destructive to all true greatness; nor is there any honor worth calling honor but what comes from an unseen source. To be great is to seem small in the eyes of men.”

Miss Graeme made no answer. She was not much accustomed to consider things seriously. A good girl in a certain true sense, she had never seen that she had to set herself to be better, or indeed to *be* anything. But she was able to feel that Donal was in earnest though she was far from understanding him, and that was much. To recognize that a man means something, reveals, as things are, no despicable amount of personal development.

“What a lovely old garden this is!” said Donal after the sequent pause. “I have never seen anything like it before.”

“It is very old-fashioned,” she answered. “Don’t you find it very stiff and formal?”

“Stately and precise, I should say rather.”

“I do not mean I can help liking it in a way.”

“Who could help liking it that had not taken up notions from people, and not from the garden itself. We should always hear the thing itself—not what is said about it.”

“You cannot say this is like nature!”

“Yes, it is; it is like human nature. Man ought to learn of nature, but not in his work *imitate* nature. His work is, through the forms that Nature gives him, to express the idea or feeling that is in him. That, it seems to me, is far more likely to produce things in harmony with nature than the attempt to imitate nature upon the small human scale.”

“You are too much of a philosopher for me!” said Miss Graeme with a smile in which was no shadow of contempt. I daresay you are right but I have never read anything about art, and cannot follow you.”

“You have probably read as much as I have. I am only talking out of what the necessity for understanding things has made me think. One must get things together in one’s thoughts, if it be only to be able to go on thinking.”

This too was beyond Miss Graeme. The silence again fell, and Donal let it lie, waiting for her to break it this time. But again he was the first. They had turned and gone a good way down the long garden, and had again turned towards the house, which Donal was contemplating across the well-ordered wilderness.

“It makes me feel as I never felt before,” he said. “There is such a sense of vanished life about the place! I seem to be in a story-book. The whole garden seems dreaming about things of long ago—when troops of ladies, now banished into pictures, wandered about the place, full of their own thoughts and fancies of life, as we are now—looking at everything with ways of thinking as old-fashioned as their garments, but not therefore farther from nature than our ways. I could not be in this garden after nightfall without feeling as if every walk were being walked by unseen feet, as if every bush might be hiding behind it some fair shape returning to dream over old memories.”

“But where is the good of fancying what is not true? I don’t care a straw for what I know to be nonsense!”

Miss Graeme was probably glad to find a spot where she could put down the foot of contradiction. She came of a family known for what the neighbors called common sense, and long in the habit of casting contempt upon everything it thought fit to characterize as superstition. The educated lowlanders are as much set against everything that appeals to the imagination, chiefly because they have so little, as the highlanders are ready to attribute reality to any imagination powerful or beautiful enough to impress them. She had now, she felt, something to say for herself.

“How do you know that?” said Donal, looking round in her face with a bright smile.

“Why imagine what you do not see?”

“Because I can only imagine what I do not see.”

“Nobody ever saw such creatures as you suppose in any garden. Why fancy the dead so uncomfortable, or so ill looked after, that they must come back to plague us?”

“Plainly they have never plagued you much!” said Donal laughing. “But just let me ask you how often you have walked up and down these walks in the dead of night?”

“Never once,” answered Miss Graeme, not without a spark of indignation. “I never was so absurd.”

“Then there may be a whole night-world that you know nothing about. You cannot tell that the place may not be thronged with ghosts, to whom you have never given a chance of appearing to you. I don't say it is so, for I know nothing, or at least little about such things. I have had myself no experience of the sort any more than you — and I have often been out

whole nights on the mountains when I was a shepherd helping my father."

"Why then should you care to trouble your fancy about them?"

"Perhaps just for that reason."

"I do not understand you."

"I mean that just because I can come into no communication with such a world as may or might be about me, I therefore imagine it. I should think that if, whenever I walked abroad at night, I was in the way of meeting and holding converse, sweet or other as the case might be with the disembodied, I should use my imagination little on their affairs, and chiefly take note of the facts I observed. But now that what seems might be, makes no show of itself, what can be more natural than that just thereupon I should occasionally employ my imagination? What otherwise is the imagination there for?"

"I am sure I do not know. I have always been in the way of thinking that the less one has to do with that faculty the better."

"Then I should think the thing, whatever it be, should not be called a faculty, which means a power of doing something or other, but a weakness, or an impediment to doing."

"Just so. I would grant that."

"But, unfortunately for your idea, and happily for mine, the history of the world shows it could never have made any progress without suggestions upon which to ground experiments resulting in knowledge: and whence could these suggestions come but from this something or other we call imagination?"

Again there was silence. Miss Graeme began to

doubt whether there was any possibility of holding rational converse with a man who was always off into some high-flying region of which she knew nothing and for which she cared as little. Besides, he was always taking the upper hand with her, and wanting either to teach or contradict her, she thought. But nothing could have been farther from Donal's drift, not to say conscious intent. His unconscious desire was to meet her upon some common plane of thought, and instinctively he talked of whatever came up that interested him. He always wanted to *meet* his fellow, and hence that occasional abundance of speech, which, however poetic might be the things he said, some did not fail to call prosiness. Had he been a man of acknowledged fame, he might have said ten times as much and been heard as an oracle, yea, what was worth little have been taken for much. Those only who are of the truth themselves, will take the truth from whatever mouth.

But it was now Miss Graeme's turn to resume.

"I should have thought," she said, "if you wanted to set your imagination at work, you would have found that easier at the castle than here. This is a very simple and modern place compared to that."

"It is a poor imagination," returned Donal, "that requires either age or any other mere accessory to rouse it. The very absence of everything external, the bareness of the mere humanity involved, may in itself be an excitement greater than any accompaniment of the antique or the picturesque. But in this old-fashioned garden, in the midst of these old-fashioned flowers, and with so many of the gentlenesses of ancient life suggested by the surroundings,

it is easier to call back the people than where all is so cold, hard, severe — so much on the defensive as in that huge, sullen pile on the hilltop.”

“I am afraid you find it dull up there !” said Miss Graeme, with a look of playful sympathy.

“Not at all,” returned Donal. “Even if I had not such an interesting pupil, one who has been used to spend day after day alone, with only clouds and heather and sheep and dogs for his companions, does not depend much on the house he may be in to provide him with pastime. Give me a chair and a table, enough fire to keep me from shivering, what books I have with me, and writing materials, and I am comfortable ; whereas at the castle I have a fine library — useless to be sure for the purposes of any modern study, but full of precious old books.—Company !” continued Donal warming to his theme, “I can there at any moment be in the very best of company ! There is greater wonder in an old library than any magic can work.”

“I do not quite understand you,” said the lady ; but she would have spoken nearer the truth if she had said she had not a glimmer of what he meant.

“Then let me explain,” said Donal : “what could necromancy do for you at the best ?”

“Well !” exclaimed Miss Graeme ; “—but I suppose if you believe in ghosts, you may as well believe in raising them too.”

“I did not mean to start any question about belief. I only wanted you to suppose necromancy for the moment a fact, and put it at its best. I mean — suppose the magician could do for you all he professed, how much would it amount to ? Would it not be

only this — to bring before your eyes a shadowy resemblance of the form of flesh and blood, itself but a passing shadow, in which the man moved on the earth, and was known to his fellow-men? Perhaps also he might succeed in drawing from him some obscure utterance concerning your future, more likely to destroy your courage than enable you to face it; so you would depart from your peep into the unknown less able to meet the duties of life than before.”

“If any one has a desire after such investigations, he must be very differently constituted from me!” said Miss Graeme.

“Are you sure of that? Did you never make yourself unhappy about what might be going to come to you? Did you never wish you could know beforehand something to guide you in ordering your way?”

“I should have to think a little before answering that question.”

“Tell me, then, what does the art of writing, common as that is nowadays, and its expansion, or development rather, in printing, do for a man who longs after personal communication with any great man who has lived before him? Instead of mocking you with an airy semblance of his bodily form, and the sound of a few doubtful words from his lips, it places in your hands the means of making yourself possessed of his inmost thoughts — and the best of those thoughts — the best at least that he had yet become able to communicate — for no man’s thoughts are of much value who has not better behind that he cannot utter. You may be inclined to object that this is not personal communication, but I say it is far

more truly personal than the other. A man's personality does not consist in the clothes he wears, though it may appear in them; no more does it consist in his body, but in himself who wears it."

As he spoke, and he did not cease just there, Miss Graeme kept looking him gravely in the face, revealing, however, more respect than interest. She had been accustomed to a very different tone in young men of her standing. In their intercourse with girls to be amusing was their main ambition; to talk such sense as had reference to other uses than the immediate ones of this world was a strange, out-of-the-way thing, little practised anywhere — certainly not in the pulpit, where the things spoken of had to do neither with this world nor with any other that ever God made, except indeed it were by a long process of transposition and interpretation. I do not say that Miss Graeme appreciated what sense lay in Donal's talk, but she perceived that he was in earnest, and that she was happily so far able to appreciate as to respect a deep pond more than a shallow one. Her thought was — what a strange new specimen of humanity was here brought within her ken; but her brother appearing put a stop to both his talk and her thinking in their respective directions.

"Well," he said, as he drew near, "I am glad to see you getting on so well together."

"How do you know we have been getting on well, Hector?" asked his sister, with something of the contradictory tone which both in jest and earnest is too common between near relations.

"Because you have been talking incessantly ever since you met."

“But we have only been contradicting each other.”

“I could tell that too by the sound of your voices at my dressing-room window; but I took it for a good sign.”

“I fear mine was almost the only voice you heard,” said Donal. “It is a fault of mine to talk, and I fear I have learned it in a way that makes it difficult to be cured.”

“What way was that?” asked Mr. Graeme.

“By having nobody to talk to. I learned it on the hillside with my sheep, and in the meadows with my cattle. At college I thought I was nearly cured of it; but now, in my comparative solitude at the castle, it has come back upon me.”

“You come here then,” said Mr. Graeme, “when you find it getting too much for you. You will find my sister quite equal to the task of your deliverance. *Similia similibus*, as the homœopaths say.”

“She has shown no sign of such a power yet, I am sorry to say,” remarked Donal, as Miss Graeme, in a somewhat hoydenish yet not ungraceful fashion, made an attempt to box the ear of her slanderous brother—a proceeding he had anticipated, and so was able to frustrate.

“You wait till she knows you better,” he said, “and you will find my sister Kate any man’s match for volubility.”

“Even if I were,” she answered, “I must know something about the thing in hand: Mr. Grant has been talking so as quite to bewilder me. He has been actually trying to persuade me”—

“I beg your pardon, Miss Graeme, but I have been trying to persuade you of nothing.”

“What! not to believe in ghosts and necromancy and witchcraft and the evil eye and ghouls and vampires, and I don’t know what all of the things we used to hear from nurses and read in old annuals!”

“I give you my word, Mr. Graeme,” answered Donal, laughing, “I have not been persuading your sister of any of these. I am certain she could be persuaded to nothing of which I had not first showed her the common sense. What I did dwell upon, and that without a doubt that she would accept it, was the evident fact that writing and printing have done more to bring us into personal relations with the great ones of our race—and that by no figure of speech but in absolute fact—than necromancy could ever have done, even granting the magician all the power he claimed. The nearest, I say, that we can come to absolute contact with the being of a man is when we learn from himself the way he thinks about the things he loves best to think about, hearing him, as it were, in his own way, and without thought of our presence, pour forth his thoughts into the ear of the universe. And in such a position does the book of a great man place us. That was what I meant to convey to your sister.”

“And,” said Mr. Graeme, “she is not such a goose as to have failed to understand you, though she has chosen to pretend stupidity.”

“I am sure,” persisted the lady, “Mr. Grant talked so as to make me think he believed in necromancy and all that sort of thing.”

“That may be,” said Donal, “but I did not try to persuade you to believe in it.”

“Oh, if you are going to hold me to the letter!”

said Miss Graeme, coloring a little. It would be impossible to get on with such a man, she thought, who not only preached when you had not the pulpit to protect you from him, but stuck so to his text that there was no amusement to be got out of the business. He was so long-winded! She did not know that if she could have met him on his own ground, and broken the flow of his thoughts with fitting opposition, his answers would have come short and sharp as the flashes of waves on rocks instead of in the slow roll of the ocean tide.

"I should think," said Mr. Graeme, "if Mr. Grant believes in such things, he must find himself at home in the terrible old castle up there, every room of which might well be the haunt of some weary ghost!"

"Excuse me, Mr. Graeme," said Donal, "but I think you are wrong in supposing that any work of man's hands, however awful because of crime done in it, he may leave behind him, could have an influence on those that come afterwards to make them believe in the marvellous, in the least degree comparable to the still presence of live thinking Nature herself. I never saw an old castle before — at least not to make any close acquaintance with it, but there is not a portion or an aspect of the grim old survival up there, interesting as it all is, that moves me at all as the mere thought of a hillside, with the veil of the twilight coming down over it, slow revealing it — for some veils are for unveiling — as the last step of a stair for the descending foot of the Lord."

"Surely, Mr. Grant, you do not expect such a personal advent!" said Miss Graeme.

"I should not like to say what I do or don't ex-

pect," said Donal — and held his peace, for he saw that this mode of uttering himself was a stumbling-block to his listeners.

Then the silence grew so awkward that Mr. Graeme felt his good breeding require him to say something from the side of the man who he supposed felt himself at last snubbed by his sister.

"If you are fond of the marvellous, Mr. Grant," he said, "there are a good many old stories about the castle that would interest you. In my childhood I was in the way of hearing not a few, and liked listening to them so much — all the more for certain sensations about the roots of my hair — that it now seems to me strange how entirely they have passed from me. I can remember how I felt, but not the cause of my so feeling. One of them indeed was brought to my mind the other day in town. It is strange how superstition seems to have its ebbs and flows! A story or legend will go to sleep for a time, and then revive with quite a fresh interest, no one knows why."

"Probably," said Donal, "it is when the tale falls upon some fresh soil suited to its reception. They are now in many countries trying to get together and preserve the remnants of such tales: perhaps some wind of such inquiry may have set the old people rousing and searching their memories and the young ones inventing: that would account for a good deal, would it not?"

"Yes, but not for all, I think. There have been no such inquiries made anywhere near us, so far as I am aware. I was at the Morven Arms last night to meet a tenant, and there the tradesmen were talking,

over their toddy, about various doings at the castle, and their frightful consequences, in one case at last. I should have thought it had all been forgotten by this time. The ratio of forgetting increases."

"I should like to hear it!" said Donal.

"Do tell him, Hector," said Miss Graeme, "and I will watch his hair."

"That will yield you no gratification," returned Donal, "for it is the hair of those who mock at such things that is in danger of a breach of manners: when their imagination is excited in that direction it affects their nerves more than the belief of the others affects theirs."

"Now I have you!" cried Miss Graeme. "What you have just said shows quite plainly that you are a believer in those things."

"That is too general a conclusion to come to. You might as well say that because I believe the Bible I believe everything the man in the pulpit says! In regard to every utterance we have a right, sometimes a duty of trying it whether it be of the truth or not. Some tales I should reject with a contempt that would satisfy even Miss Graeme; of others I might say—'These seem as if they might be true'; and of still others, 'These ought to be true, I think.' But do tell me the story."

"It is not," replied Mr. Graeme, "a very peculiar one—certainly not peculiar to our castle; a similar legend belongs to several in Scotland, and, I fancy, in other countries as well. There is one not far from here round whose dark basements—or hoary battlements—who shall say which? floats a similar story. It is of a hidden room, whose position or entrance no-

body knows, and connected with which are various vague and broken rumors."

"It is," said Donal, "a species of report very likely to arise by a kind of cryptogamic generations. The common people, seeing from without the huge proportions of the place, and themselves accustomed to the narrowest dwellings, and perhaps upon occasion admitted to a succession of rooms and passages, to them as intricate and confused as a rabbit-warren, in which they find it impossible to retrace even a few steps from the door, must be very ready, I should think, to imagine the existence of places within unknown even to the inhabitants themselves of the pile.—I beg your pardon. Do tell us the story of it?"

"Mr. Grant," said Kate, "you perplex me. I begin to doubt if you have any principles. One moment you take one side and the next the other!"

"No, no; I only love my own side too well to let any traitors into its ranks. I would have nothing to do with lies."

"Oh, it is all lies together."

"Then I want to hear this one," said Donal merrily, and Mr. Graeme began.

"Whether it belongs to this castle by right I cannot tell, but as I have heard it attributed to another, I daresay it is wide-spread and you have heard it before. It is this: During the earldom of a certain recklessly wicked man, who not only oppressed his poor neighbors by robbing them, and even slaying them where his wrath was kindled, but actually went so far as to break the Sabbath, and behave as wickedly on that as on any other day of the week, a com-

pany was seated late one Saturday night, playing cards, and drinking, and talking as such would talk. And all the time Sunday was drawing nearer and nearer, and nobody heeded. At length one of them, seeing the hands of the clock at a quarter to twelve, made the remark that it was time to stop. He did not mention the sacred day, but all knew what he meant. Thereupon the earl laughed, and told him that, if he was afraid of the kirk-session, he might go, and another would take his hand. But the man sat still, and said no more till the clock gave the warning to the hour. Then he spoke again, and said it was almost the Sabbath day, and they ought not to go on playing. As he said it his mouth was pulled all on one side. But the earl struck his fist on the table, and swore a great oath that if any man rose he would run him through.

“ ‘What care I for the Sabbath !’ he said. ‘I gave you your chance to go,’ he added, turning to the man who had spoken : he was dressed in black like a minister — ‘and you would not take it : now you shall sit where you are.’ He glared fiercely at the man, and the man returned his gaze with an equally fiery stare. And now the company first began to discover what perhaps through the fumes of the whiskey and the smoke of the pine-torches they had not observed before, that none of them knew the man ; not one of them had ever seen him before. And they looked at him and could not turn their eyes from him, and a cold terror began to creep through their vitals. But the stranger kept his fierce, scornful look fixed on the earl, and spoke : ‘And I have given you your chance,’ he said, ‘and you would not take it : now you shall sit still

where you are, and no Sabbath shall you ever see.' That moment the clock began to strike, and the man's mouth came straight again. But when the hammer had struck six times, it struck no more, and the clock stopped. 'This day twelvemonth,' said the man, 'you shall see me again, and once the same time every year till your time is up — and I hope you will enjoy your game!' The earl would have sprung to his feet, but could not, and the man was nowhere to be seen. He had vanished, taking with him both door and windows of the room — not as Samson carried off the gates of Gaza, however, for he left not the least sign of where they had been. And from that day to this no one has been able to find the room; and there the wicked earl and his companions to this day sit playing with the same pack of cards and waiting their doom. Some have said that on that same day of the year — only, unfortunately, testimony differs as to the day — shouts of drunken laughter may be heard issuing from somewhere in the castle, but as to whence they come — none can ever agree as to the direction even from which they come. That is the story."

"And a very good one too!" said Donal. "I wonder what the ground of it is; small enough foundation is wanted for such! It must have had its beginning as well as every true story!"

"Then you believe it?" said Miss Graeme — "of course you do?"

"Not quite," he replied. "For one thing, a certain experience I have had up there is rather against it."

"What! you have seen something!" cried Miss

Graeme, her big eyes growing bigger, and revealing that she was quite ready to listen to a tale of wonder of her own time.

“No, I have seen nothing,” answered Donal, “only heard something I cannot account for.—One night, the first I was there, indeed, waking up suddenly, I heard the sound of a far off musical instrument, faint and sweet, but such as nearer *might* have been a powerful sound.”

The brother and sister changed looks. Donal went on.

“I got up and felt my way down the winding stair—I sleep at the bottom of Baliol’s tower—but at the bottom lost myself, and had to sit down and wait for the light. Then I heard it again, but seemed no nearer to it than before, and I have never heard it since. I have never mentioned the thing before, but I presume speaking of it to you can do no harm. You at least will not raise any fresh rumors to injure the respectability of the castle. I cannot discover any instrument in the castle from which such a sound might have proceeded. Lady Arctura is no musician, I am told, and certainly was not likely to be at her piano in the middle of the night.”

“It is difficult to say how far sound may travel in the stillness of the night, when there are no other sound-waves to cross and break it.”

“That is all very well, Hector,” said his sister, “but you know that Mr. Grant is neither the first nor the second who has heard that sound—and in the night too!”

“One thing is pretty clear,” said her brother, “it can have nothing to do with the revellers at their

cards. The sounds reported are of a different kind from any that could come from them!"

"That," said Donal, "is why I said my experience was against the tale. But are you sure none of them had a violin with him? He might be glad enough to take to one if he had, and the sound might have been that of a ghostly or ghastly violin."

"What horrible words you use, Mr. Grant!" said Miss Graeme, with a shudder sufficient to reveal to Donal that it was from no lack of imagination that she insisted on a commonplace view of things mysterious.

"The sound," pursued Donal, "though like that of a stringed instrument, was so different from anything I had ever heard before, except perhaps certain equally inexplicable sounds occasionally heard among the hills, that a word of eerie terror seems fittest to use with it."

Thus they went on talking for a while, as up and down the sunny garden they walked, the sun hot above their heads, and the grass cool under their feet.

"It is enough," said Miss Graeme, with a laugh a little forced, "to make one glad that the castle does not go with the title."

"Why so?" asked Donal.

"Because," she answered, "though we are but distantly related to the family, were anything to happen to the boys up there, Hector would come in to the title."

"Then you would only have the music to the bargain," said Donal.

"I cannot say I am of my sister's mind," said Mr.

Graeme. "A title with nothing to keep it up I should count a simple misfortune. I certainly should not take out the patent, or what do you call it? No wise man would ever lay claim to a title except he had the means to make it respected."

"Have we come to that," exclaimed Donal, "that even the old titles of the country must be buttressed into respectability by the money alongside of them? We away in quiet places reading old history books are accustomed to think differently. What better are they then than that of Earl of Arundel would be if a millionaire money-lender were to buy the old keep?"

"I believe that is the dangerous condition of that title," said Mr. Graeme, perhaps willing to give the subject the slip — only Donal would not let him.

"If I were inheritor of a title," he persisted, "I would, were I as poor as Lazarus, take it and use it, if only to give a lesson to Dives up-stairs. I scorn to think that honor should wait on the heels of wealth. You may think it is because I am, have been, and always shall be a poor man, but if I know myself it is not so. At the same time it is but a trifle, and if you had said you would not use it for any other reason than in homage to mammon, I should have had nothing to say."

"For my part," said Miss Graeme, "I have no quarrel with riches except that they do not come my way. I should know how to make good use of them!"

Donal made no other reply than lay in turning a look of divinely stupid surprise and pity upon the face of the young woman. He knew it was of no use to say anything. Argument was so little to the point that, were it absolutely triumphant, mammon would

sit just where he was before. In reading the New Testament — reading it, that is, as if the Master actually meant something, and that the best thing, equally when he spoke and when he was silent, he had marked the great indifference of the Lord as to the convincing of the understanding: when they knew the thing itself, then they would understand its relations and its reasons — certainly not before. If truth belonged to the human soul, then that soul was able to see it and know it: if it did the truth, it took therein the first possible, and almost the last necessary, step towards understanding it.

Miss Graeme caught his look, and must have understood its expression if not the cause of it, for her face became of a more than rosy red, and the conversation grew crumbly.

It was a half-holiday, and Donal stayed to tea with them, and after it went over the farm-buildings with Mr. Graeme, revealing such a practical knowledge of all that was going on there, that his entertainer soon saw he must treat him as one whose opinion was worth something whether his fancies were or not. And so began an acquaintance which, in the absence of others which might have been more attractive on either side, ripened into an intimacy, and thence into a friendship, which was a great comfort to Donal; for, however capable of living alone, he was as ready as any man to flourish afresh in genial human atmospheres. He that loveth not his brother whom he hath seen, how shall he love God whom he hath not seen?

CHAPTER XII.

THE TRUE PATH.

THE days went on and on, and still Donal saw next to nothing of the earl. Thrice he had met him on his way to or from the walled garden in which he was wont to take what little exercise he ever did take ; on one of those occasions his lordship had spoken to him very courteously, on another had scarcely noticed him, and on the third passed him without the smallest recognition. Donal, who with equal mind took everything as it came, troubled himself not at all about the matter. He was doing his work as well as he knew how, and that was enough : why should he desire the recognition of what was an essential to his own being ?

He saw scarcely anything now of Lord Fergie, whose ardor after mathematics and Greek, such as it had been, was so much abated that he no longer sought the superior scholarship of Donal. He could not help fancying also that the young fellow avoided him. Of Lady Arctura he saw as little as ever, and of Miss Carmichael happily nothing at all. But it pained him to see Lady Arctura, as often as he chanced to pass her about the place, looking so far from peaceful. What was the cause of it ? Most well-meaning young women are in general tolerably happy — partly perhaps because they are content

with small attainments, and do not trouble themselves much about what alone is worth their thought — and perhaps the first impulse of such is to despise sadness as something unworthy. But if condemned to such a limited circle as poor Arctura, and at the same time consumed with strenuous and genuine attempts to order, not their ways, but their thoughts and feelings according to supposed requirements of the gospel, such would be at once more sad and more worthy themselves. It is the narrow ways trodden of men that are miserable. Those it is that have high walls on each side, with but an occasional glimpse of the sky above: in such a path was Arctura trying to walk. But the true narrow is not unlovely! It may be full of toil, but cannot be full of misery. In the world itself are many more lovely footpaths than high roads. The true path has not walls, but fields and forests and gardens around it, and limitless sky overhead. It has its sorrows, but they lie on its sides, and many leave the path to pick them up, alas! Lady Arctura was devouring her own soul in silence, with none but such wretched help as the self-sufficient Miss Carmichael, who had never encountered a real difficulty in her life, was able to give her. She dealt with her honestly according to her ability, doing right, but all wrong in what she thought right, and no amount of doing wrong right can put the soul in the place in which the doing of the real truth alone can set it — though it may, I grant, be the way towards it.

The autumn passed, and the winter was at hand — a terrible time to the old and ailing even in lands near the sun — to the young and healthy a merry

time even in the snows and bitter frosts of the east coast of Scotland. Davie was looking forward to the skating, and in particular to the pleasure he was going to have in teaching Mr. Grant, who had never done any sliding beyond that of a poor boy on the soles of his nailed shoes, but who, when the time came, acquired it the more rapidly that he never cared what blunders he made in trying to learn a thing. The dread of blundering is a great bar to the success of the self-anxious.

He continued to visit the Comins often, and found continued comfort and help in their friendship, while the letters he received from home, especially those from his friend Sir Gibbie, who not unfrequently wrote for Donal's father and mother, were a great nourishment to him.

As the cold and the night-time grew, the water-level rose in Donal's well, and the poetry began to flow. When we have no summer without, we must supply it from within. Those must have comfort in themselves who are sent to comfort others. Up in his aerie, like an eagle above the low affairs of the earth, he led a keener life, breathed the breath of a more genuine existence than the rest of the house. No doubt the old cobbler, seated at his last over a mouldy shoe, breathed a yet higher air than Donal weaving his verse, or reading grand old Greek in his tower; but Donal was on the same path — the only path that has an infinite end — that of his divine destiny. He had often thought of trying the old man with some of the best poetry he knew, desirous of knowing what receptivity he might have for it; but always when with him he had hitherto forgot his proposed inquiry

and only thought of it again after he had left him ; apparently, the original flow of the cobbler's life put the thought of probing it out of his mind, for genuine life is above experiment.

One afternoon, when the last of the leaves had fallen, and the country was as bare as the heart of an old man who has lived to himself, Donal, seated before a great fire of coal and boat-logs, fell a thinking, of the old garden, now vanished with the summer, and living only in the memory of his delight. It grew and grew in him, and brought forth its own thoughts in the mind of the poet. He turned to his table, and began to write what, after many emendations upon following nights resulted in this : —

THE OLD GARDEN.

I.

I stood in an ancient garden
With high red walls around ;
Over them gray and green lichens
In shadowy arabesque wound.

The topmost climbing blossoms
On fields kine-haunted looked out ;
But within were shelter and shadow,
And daintiest odors about ;

There were alleys and lurking arbors —
Deep glooms into which to dive ;
The lawns were as soft as fleeces —
Of daisies I counted but five.

The sun-dial was so aged
It had gathered a thoughtful grace ;

And the round-about of the shadow
Seemed to have furrowed its face.

The flowers were all of the oldest
That ever in garden sprung ;
Red, and blood-red, and dark purple,
The rose lamps flaming hung.

Along the borders fringed
With broad, thick edges of box,
Stood foxgloves and gorgeous poppies,
And great-eyed hollyhocks.

There were junipers trimmed into castles,
And ash-trees bowed into tents ;
For the garden, though ancient and pensive,
Still wore quaint ornaments.

It was all so stately fantastic,
Its old wind hardly would stir :
Young Spring, when she merrily entered,
Must feel it no place for her.

II.

I stood in the summer morning
Under a cavernous yew ;
The sun was gently climbing,
And the scents rose after the dew.

I saw the wise old mansion,
Like a cow in the noonday-heat,
Stand in a lake of shadows
That rippled about its feet.

Its windows were oriel and latticed,
Lowly and wide and fair ;
And its chimneys like clustered pillars
Stood in the thin blue air.

White doves, like the thoughts of a lady,
 Haunted it in and out ;
With a train of green and blue comets,
 The peacock went marching about.

The birds in the trees were singing
 A song as old as the world,
Of love and green leaves and sunshine,
 And winter folded and furled.

They sang that never was sadness
 But it melted and passed away ;
They sang that never was darkness
 But in came the conquering day.

And I knew that a maiden somewhere,
 In a sober sunlit gloom,
In a nimbus of shining garments,
 An aureole of white-browed bloom,

Looked out on the garden dreamy,
 And knew not that it was old ;
Looked past the gray and the sombre,
 And saw but the green and the gold.

III.

I stood in the gathering twilight,
 In a gently blowing wind ;
And the house looked half uneasy,
 Like one that was left behind.

The roses had lost their redness,
 And cold the grass had grown ;
At roost were the pigeons and peacock,
 And the dial was dead gray stone.

The world by the gathering twilight
 In a gauzy dusk was clad ;

It went in through my eyes to my spirit,
And made me a little sad.

Grew and gathered the twilight,
And filled my heart and brain;
The sadness grew more than sadness,
And turned to a gentle pain.

Browned and brooded the twilight,
And sank down through the calm,
Till it seemed for some human sorrow
There could not be any balm.

IV.

Then I knew that up a staircase,
Which untrod will yet creak and shake,
Deep in a distant chamber,
A ghost was coming awake.

In the growing darkness growing
Growing till her eyes appear,
Like spots of deeper twilight,
But more transparent clear —

Thin as hot air up-trembling,
Thin as sun-molten crape,
The deepening shadow of something
Taketh a certain shape;

A shape whose hands are unlifted
To throw back her blinding hair;
A shape whose bosom is heaving,
But draws not in the air.

And I know by what time the moonlight
On her nest of shadows will sit,
Out on the dim lawn gliding
That shadow of shadows will flit.

V.

The moon is dreaming upward
From a sea of cloud and gleam ;
She looks as if she had seen us
Never but in a dream.

Down that stair I know she is coming,
Bare-footed, lifting her train ;
It creaks not — she hears it creaking,
For the sound is in her brain.

Out at the side-door she's coming,
With a timid glance right and left ;
Her look is hopeless yet eager,
The look of a heart bereft.

Across the lawn she is flitting
Her eddying robe in the wind,
Are her fair feet bending the grasses ?
Her hair is half lifted behind !

VI.

Shall I stay to look on her nearer ?
Would she start and vanish away ?
Oh, no ! she will never see me,
If I stand as near as I may.

It is not this wind she is feeling,
Not this cool grass below ;
'Tis the wind and the grass of an evening
A hundred years ago.

She sees no roses darkling,
No stately hollyhocks dim ;
She is only thinking and dreaming
Of the garden, the night, and him ;

Of the unlit windows behind her,
 Of the timeless dial-stone,
 Of the trees, and the moon, and the shadows,
 A hundred years ago.

'Tis a night for all ghostly lovers
 To haunt the best-loved spot :
 Is he come in his dreams to this garden?
 I gaze, but I see him not.

VII.

I will not look on her nearer —
 My heart would be torn in twain ;
 From mine eyes the garden would vanish
 In the falling of their rain.

I will not look on a sorrow
 That darkens into despair ;
 On the surge of a heart that cannot —
 Yet cannot cease to bear.

My soul to hers would be calling —
 She would hear no word it said ;
 If I cried aloud in the stillness
 She would never turn her head.

She is dreaming the sky above her,
 She is dreaming the earth below ;
 This night she lost her lover
 A hundred years ago.

It was mostly on half-holidays, when he had a good stretch of time before him that he made his verses ; he did not indulge oftener. If thought do not greatly exceed utterance, no expression of it would be of much value. The twilight had fallen while he was writing, and the wind had risen. It was now blowing

a gale. When he could no longer see, he rose to light his lamp, and looked out of the window. All was dusk around him, above and below nothing to be distinguished from the mass, in which something and nothing seemed to share an equal uncertainty. He heard the wind, but could not see the clouds sweeping before it, for all was cloud overhead, and no change of light or feature showed the shifting of the measureless bulk. A gray stormy space was the whole idea of the creation. He seemed to gaze into a void,—say rather a condition of things inappreciable by his senses. A strange feeling came over him as if he were looking out of a window in the walls of the visible world into the region unknown, to man shapeless quite, therefore terrible, wherein wander the things all that have not yet found or form or sensible embodiment wherewithal to manifest themselves to eyes or ears or hands of mortals. In such a region imagination might indeed have scope, if imagination could live therein at all. As he gazed, the huge shapeless hulks of the ships of chaos, dimly awful suggestions of animals uncreate, yet vaguer motions of what was not, seemed to come heaving up, to vanish even from the fancy as they approached the window. Earth was far below, invisible, only through the dark came the moaning of the sea, which the wind drove in still enlarging waves upon the flat shore, a level of doubtful grass and sand, three miles away. It seemed to his ear as if the moaning of the sea was the voice of the darkness lamenting, like a repentant Satan or Judas, that it was not the light, and could not hold the light and become as the light, but must that moment cease when the light

began to enter it. Darkness and moaning seemed to be all that the earth contained. Would the souls of the mariners shipwrecked this night go forth into the ceaseless turmoil? or would they, leaving behind them the sense for storms, as for all things soft and sweet as well, enter only a vast silence, where was nothing to be aware of but each solitary self? Many thoughts, many theories passed through Donal's mind as he sought to land the conceivable from the wandering bosom of the limitless, and he was just arriving at the conclusion that, as all things seen must be after the fashion of the unseen whence they come, as the very genius of embodiment is likeness, therefore the soul of man must of course have natural relations with matter; but, on the other hand, as the spirit must be the home and origin of all this moulding, assimilating, modeling power, and the spirit only that is in harmonious oneness with its origin can fully exercise this deputed creative power, then it must be only in proportion to the eternal life in them that spirits are able to draw to themselves matter and clothe themselves in it, so entering into full relation with the world of storms and sunsets — he was, I say, just arriving at this hazarded conclusion, when he started out of his reverie, and was suddenly all ear to listen. Again! Yes! it was the same sound which had sent him that first night wandering through the house in fruitless quest. It came in two or three fitful chords that melted into each other like the colors in the lining of a shell, then ceased. He went to the door, opened it and listened. A cold wind came rushing up the stair. He heard nothing. He stepped out on the stair, shut his door,

and listened. It came again — a strange unearthly sound. If ever disembodied sound went wandering in the wind, just such a sound must it be! Donal, knowing nothing of music save in the forms of tone and vowel change and rythm and rime, felt as if he could have listened forever to the wild wandering sweetness of lamentation. But almost immediately they ceased — then once more came again, but apparently from far off, dying away on the distant waves of the billowy air, out of whose wandering bosom it seemed to issue. It was as the wailing of a summer wind, caught and swept along in a tempest from the frozen north.

The moment he ceased to expect it any more, he began to think whether it must not have come from the house after all. He stole down the stair. What he would do he did not know. He could not go following an airy nothing all over the house, of a great part of which he as yet knew nothing. His constructive mind would have gladly gained a complete idea of the castle, outside and in — it was almost a passion with him to fit the outsides and insides of things together in his understanding; but there were whole suits of rooms into which, except the earl and Lady Arctura were to leave home for a while, he could not hope to enter. It was little more than mechanically that he went vaguely seeking the sound: ere he was half-way down the stair he recognized the hopelessness of the attempt, but kept on to the schoolroom, where his tea was waiting him.

But after that soon came another phenomenon, involving more wonder, and doubt even painful. It pointed in the same direction as the former, though

what that direction was, it was impossible for Donal even to guess. He had returned to his room, and was sitting again at work, now reading and meditating. How long he had thus sat he could not have told, for when the mind is busy, it takes little note of the phantasm Time, when, in one of the lulls of the storm, he became aware of another sound — one most unusual to his ears, for he never required any attention in his room, that of the steps of some one coming up the stair — heavy steps, not such as of one accustomed to run up and down on ordinary service. He waited listening. The steps came nearer and nearer, and stopped at his door. A hand fumbled about it and found the latch, lifted it and entered. To Donal's surprise, and something to his dismay, it was the earl. The dismay was from his appearance. He was deadly pale, and his eyes more like those of a corpse than of a man moving about among his living fellows. Donal started to his feet. The earl turned his head towards him ; but in his look there was no atom of recognition, not as much as amounted to an acknowledgment of his presence ; the sound of his rising merely had its half-mechanical effect upon his brain. He turned away immediately, went to the window, and there stood much as Donal had stood a little while before, looking out, but with the attitude of one listening rather than one trying to see. There was indeed nothing now but the blackness to be seen — nor anything to be heard but the roaring of the wind, with the roaring of the great billows rolled along in it. As he stood the time to Donal seemed long : it was but about five minutes. Was the man out of his mind, or only a sleep-walker ? How could

he be asleep so early in the night? But as he stood doubting and wondering, once more came a musical cry out of the darkness. Immediately came from the earl what seemed a response — a soft, low murmur, by degrees becoming audible, in the tone of a man meditating aloud, but in a restrained ecstasy. From his words he seemed to be still hearing the sounds ærial, though they came no more to the ears of Donal.

“Yet once again, ere I forsake the flesh, are my ears blest with that voice! It is the song of the eternal woman! For me she sings! Sing on, siren; my soul is a listening universe, and therein nought but thy voice!”

He paused, and after a time began afresh: —

“It is the wind in the tree of life! Its leaves rustle in words of love. Under its shadow I shall one day lie, with her I loved — and killed! Ere that day comes, she will have forgiven and forgotten, and all will be well.

“Hark the notes! Clear as a flute! Full and downy as a violin! They are colors! They are flowers! They are alive! I can see them as they grow, as they blow! Those are primroses! Those are pimpernels! Those high, intense burning ones — so soft, yet so certain — what are they! Jasmine? No, that flower is not a note! It is a chord, and what a chord! I mean what a flower! I never saw that flower before — never on this earth! It must be a flower of the paradise whence comes the music! It is! It is! Do I not remember that night when I sailed in the great ship across the ocean of the stars, and scented the airs of heaven, and saw the pearly

gates gleaming across myriads of miles — saw, plain as I see them now, the flowers in the fields within! Ah, me! The dragon that guards the golden apples! See his crest — his crest and his emerald eyes! He comes floating up through the murky lake! It is Geryon — come to bear me to the gyre below!”

With that he turned, and with a somewhat quickened step left the room, hastily shutting the door behind him, as if to keep back the creature of his vision.

Strong-hearted and strong-brained, Donal had yet stood absorbed as if he too were out of the body, and knew nothing more of this earth and its presences. There is something more terrible in a presence that is not a presence than in a vision of the bodiless. A present ghost is not so terrible as an absent one, as a present, but deserted body. He stood a moment helpless, then pulled himself together and tried to think. What should he do? What *could* he do? What was required of him? Was anything required of him? Had he any right to do anything? Could anything be done that would not both be and cause a wrong? His first impulse was to follow: a man in such a condition, whatever was the condition, was surely not one to be left to go whither he would among the heights and depths of the castle, where he might break his neck any moment. Interference no doubt was dangerous, but he would follow him at least a little way! He heard the steps going down the stair before him, and made haste after him. But ere the earl could have reached the bottom of the stair, the sound of his descending steps ceased; and Donal knew he must have left it by one of the doors opening on other floors.

CHAPTER XIII.

IN COUNCIL.

HE would gladly have told his friend the cobbler all about the strange occurrence ; but he did not feel sure it would be right to carry from it a report of the house where he held a position of trust : and what made him doubtful was that first he doubted whether the cobbler would consider it right. But he went to see him a day before his usual time, in the desire to be near the only man to whom it was possible that he might perhaps tell it.

The moment he entered the room where the cobbler sat at work beside his wife, he saw that something was the matter. But they welcomed him with their usual cordiality, nor was much time allowed to pass before Mrs. Comin made him acquainted with the cause of their anxiety.

“ We’re jist a wee triblet, sir,” she said, “ about Eppie.”

“ I’m very sorry,” said Donal with a pang : he had thought things were going right with her. He begged to know what was the matter.

“ It’s no sae easy to say,” returned her grandmother. “ It may be only a fancy o’ the auld fowk, but it seems to baith o’ ’s she has a w’y wi’ her ’at disna come o’ the richt. She’ll be that meek as gien she thocht naething at a’ o’ hersel, and the next minute

she'll be angert at a word. She canna bide a syllable said anent hersel' 'ats no correç' to the verra hair. It's as gien she dreedit waur ahint it, an' wad mairch to the defence. I'm no makin' mymeanin' that clear, I doobt, but ye'll ken it for a' that !”

“ I think I do,” said Donal. “ I see nothing of her.”

“ I wadna won'er at that, sir. She may weel haud oot o' your gait, feelin' rebuikit afore ye, wha ken a' about her gaein's on wi' my lord !”

“ I don't know how I should see her, though,” returned Donal.

“ Didna she sweep oot the schoolroom first whan ye gaed, sir ?”

“ When I think of it — yes.”

“ Does she still that same ?”

“ I do not know. Understanding now at what hour in the morning the room will be ready for me, I do not go to it sooner.”

“ It's but the luik, and the general cairriage o' the lassie !” said the old woman. “ Gien we had onything to tak a haud o', we wad maybe think the less. True, she was aye some — what ye micht ca' a bit cheengeable in her w'ys ; but she used aye, whan she had the chance, to be unco' willin' to gie her mither there or mysel' a spark o' glaidness like. It pleased her to be pleasin' i' the eyes o' the auld fowk, though they war but her ain. But noo we maunna say a word til her. We hae nae business to luik til her for naething ! No 'at she's aye like that ; but it comes sae aft 'at at last we hardly daur open our moo's for the fear o' hoo she'll tak it. Only a' the time it's mair as gien she was flingin' awa' something o' her

ain something 'at she didna like an' wad fain be rid o', than at she cared sae varra muckle for onything we said no til her min'. She tuik a haud o' the words, nae doobt; but I canna help thinkin' 'at maist whatever we had said, it wad hae been a' the same. Something to complain o' 's never far awa' whan ye're ill-pleased a'ready."

"It's no the duin' o' the richt, ye see," said the cobbler. "I mean, that's no itsel' the en', but the richt humor o' the sowl towards a' things thocht or felt or dune. That's richteousness, an' oot o' that comes, o' the varra necessity o' natur', a' richt deeds o' whatever kin'. Whaur they comena furth, it's whaur the sowl, the thocht o' the man's no richt. Oor puir lassie shaws a' mainner o' sma' infirmities jist 'cause the humor o' her sowl's no hermonious wi' the trowth, no hermonious in itsel', no at ane wi' the true thing — wi' the true man — wi' the true God. It may even be said it's a sma' thing' at a man should do wrang, sae lang as he's capable o' doin' wrang, and luves na the richt wi' hert and sowl."

"But surely, Anerew," interposed his wife, holding up her hands in a mild deprecating horror, "ye wadna lat the lassie du wrang gien ye could haud her richt?"

"No, I wadna," replied her husband, "supposin' her haudin' richt cam o' ony degree o' perception o' the richt on her pairt. But supposin' it was only 'at I had the pooer to haud her frae ill by ootward constraint o' ony kin' whatever, leavin' her ready up' the first opportunity to turn aside; whereas, gien she had dune wrang, she wad repent o't, an' see what a foul thing it was to gang again' the holy wull o' him

'at made an' dee'd for her — I lea ye to jeege for yersel' what any man 'at luv'd God 'an luv'd the lass an' luv'd the richt wad chuse. We maun haud baith een open upo' the trowth an' no blink sidewise upo' the warld an' its richteousness wi' ane o' them. Wha wadna be Zacchaeus wi' the Lord in his hoose, an' the richteousness o' God himsel' growin' in 's hert, raither nor the prood pharisee wha had done nae ill he wad acknowledge — maybe kent nane he was duin' at the time, an' thought it a shame to speak to sic a man !”

The grandmother held her peace, thinking probably that so long as there was a chance of keeping respectable, she preferred regarding that possibility rather than the gain that might come through the loss of the world's opinion.

“Is there onything ye think I could do?” said Donal. “I confess I'm some feart at meddlin'; there's sae mony a chance o' duin' mair ill nor guid.”

“I wadna hae you appear, sir,” said Andrew, “in onything concernin' her. Ye'er a yoong man yersel' and fowk's herts as weel as fowk's tongues are no to be lippent til. I hae seen fowk, 'cause they couldna believe in a body duin' a thing jist frae a sma' modicum o' guid wull, set themsel's to invent what they ca'd a motive to acoont for't — something, that is, that wad hae prevailt upo' themsel's to gar them du't. Sic fowk canna un'erstan' a body duin' onything jist 'cause it was worth duin' in itsel'.”

“But maybe,” said the old woman, returning to the practical, “as ye hae been pleased to say ye're on freen'ly terms wi' mistress Brooks, ye could jist see gin she's observed ony resumption o' the auld affair ”

Donal promised, and as soon as he reached the castle, sought an interview with the housekeeper. She told him she had been particularly pleased of late with Eppie's attention to her work, and readiness to make herself useful. If she did look sometimes a little out of heart, they must remember, she said, that they had been young themselves once, and that it was not easy to forget though one might give up. But she would keep her eyes open.

CHAPTER XIV.

TEACHER TURNED PUPIL.

THE winter came at last in good earnest ; first black frost, then white snow, then sleet and wind and rain ; then it went back to snow again, which fell steady and calm, and lay thick. Next came hard frosts and brought Davie plenty of skating, and the delight of teaching his master. Donal had many falls, but was soon, partly in virtue of those same falls, a very decent skater. Davie claimed all the merit of the successful training ; and when his master did anything particularly well, would immediately remark with pride, that it was he who had taught him to skate. But the best thing was that Davie noted the immediate faith with which Donal did or tried to do what Davie told him ; for this reacted in opening Davie's mind to the beauty and dignity of obedience, and went a long way towards revealing to him the essentially low moral condition of the man who seeks freedom in refusing to act at the will of another. He who continues to do so will come by degrees to have no will of his own, and act only from impulse — which may be the will of a devil. So Davie and Donal grew together into one heart of friendship. Donal never longed for his hours with Davie to pass, and Davie was never so happy as when with Donal, whose was the delight of

leading a young soul gently into the paths of liberty. Nothing but the teaching of him who made the human soul can make that soul free, but it is in great measure through those who have already learned that he teaches ; and Davie was an apt pupil, promising to need not much of the discipline of failure and pain, because he was strong to believe, and ready to obey.

But Donal was not all the day with Davie, and latterly had begun to feel a little anxious about the time the boy spent away from him — partly with his brother, partly with the people about the stable, and partly with his father. Of his father he evidently saw more than did Forgue, but the amount of loneliness the earl could endure seemed to Donal, from what he had heard, amazing. Evidently, however, he found the presence of his younger son less irksome to him than that of any other. Concerning his time with his father, Donal after what he had seen and heard, felt more than concerning the rest of it, but felt it a very delicate thing to ask him any questions on the subject. At length, however, Davie himself had begun to open up on the matter.

“Mr. Grant,” said he one day, “I wish you could hear the grand fairy stories my papa tells !”

“I wish I might,” answered Donal.

“I will ask him to let you come and hear. I have told him that you make fairy tales, too ; only he has another way of doing it quite ; and I must confess,” added Davie a little pompously, “that I do not follow him so easily as you. And then, I sometimes think, there is nothing in what you call the cupboard behind the curtain of the story. I sometimes think it has no

cupboard or curtain at all. I will ask him to-day to let you come."

"No, I think that would hardly do," said Donal, "your father likes to tell his boy fairy tales, but he might not care to tell them to a man. You must remember too that, though I have been in the house what *you* think a long time, your father has seen very little of me, and might feel me in the way; invalids do not generally enjoy the company of strangers: you had better not ask him."

"But I have often told him how good you are, Mr. Grant, and how you can't bear anything that is not right, and I am sure he must like you — I don't mean so well as I do, because you haven't to teach him anything, and nobody can love anybody so well as if he teaches him to be good."

"There is truth in that," answered Donal, "but still I think you had better leave it alone, lest he should not like your asking him. I should not like you to be disappointed."

"I could bear that, sir. I have learned not to mind so much as I used. And if you do not say positively that I am not to do it, I think I will venture." Donal said no more. He did not feel at liberty, from his own feeling merely, to stop the boy's action. The thing was not wrong, and something might be intended to come out of it! He shrank from the least ruling of events, believing man's only call to action is that of the Right, demanding of him embodiment. So he left Davie to do as he pleased. But he went so much farther as to try to get from him some hint as to the sort of the fairy tales his father told him.

“It’s not always he tells me one, sir ; I think it has something to do with the time of the day when I see him.”

“What time does he generally tell them ?” asked Donal.

“Generally when I go to him after tea.”

“Do you go any time you like ?”

“Yes ; but he does not always let me stay. Sometimes he talks about mamma, I think, but so strangely that I cannot be sure whether it is not a part of the fairy tale. Sometimes,” continued Davie, to make his statement correct, “he has told me one in the middle of the day. I wonder whether he would if I were to wake him up in the night. That of course I must not do, because papa is not at all strong, and has terrible headaches, Simmons says — and sometimes the stories are so terrible that I beg him to stop.”

“And does he stop ?”

“Well — no — I don’t think he ever does. When a story is once begun, I suppose it ought to be finished !”

Donal did not reply, but could not help thinking there were stories it was better to cut short the telling of as soon as begun.

So the matter rested for the time, and nothing more was heard of it. But about a week after, Donal one morning received through the butler an invitation to dine with the earl. He concluded that this was due to Davie, and expected to find him with his father. He put on his best clothes, and followed the butler up the grand staircase. All the great rooms of the castle were on the first floor, but he

passed the entrance to them, following his guide up and up, winding and winding, to the second floor, where the earl had his own apartment. Here he was shown into a comparatively small room, richly furnished after a sombrely ornate fashion, but the drapery and coverings much faded, and worn even to considerable shabbiness. It had been for a century or so in use as the private sitting-room of the lady of the castle, and was now used, perhaps in memory of his wife, by the master of the house. Here he received his sons, and now Donal. The room in which Donal first saw him was a story and a half lower: there he received those who came to him on such business as he was compelled to pay or seem to pay attention to. But if there was one thing more than another that the earl hated it was anything bearing the appearance even of business, and less business could no man even be said to do.

There was no one in the room when Donal entered, but in about ten minutes a door opened at the further end of the room, and Lord Morven entered from his bedroom. Donal rose. The earl shook hands with him with some faint show of kindness. Almost the same moment the butler entered from a third door, and said dinner waited. The earl turned and led the way, and Donal followed. The room they entered was again a rather small one, more like a breakfast than dinner room. The meal was laid on a little round table for two. Simmons alone was in waiting. While they ate and drank, which his lordship did sparingly, not a word was spoken. Donal would have found it embarrassing had he not been prepared for any amount, almost any kind of the peculiar. Beyond

the silence there was nothing else that was strange, except that his lordship took no notice whatever of his guest, leaving all the attention to the care of the butler. He looked very white and worn — Donal thought a good deal worse than when he saw him first. His cheeks were more sunken, his hair more gray, and his eyes more weary, with a consuming fire in them, that had no longer much fuel — was burning only the remnants. He stooped over his plate as if to hide the operation of eating, and drank his wine with a trembling hand. Every motion seemed to Donal to indicate an apparent indifference to both food and drink : it was easy from the way in which his lordship sat for Donal to make such observation. At length the more solid part of the meal was removed, and he was left alone with the strange man, fruit upon the table, and two wine-decanter, from one of which the earl helped himself, and passed it to Donal, saying as he did so,

“You are very good to my little Davie, Mr. Grant. He is full of your kindness to him. There is nobody like you!”

“A little goes a long way with Davie, my lord.”

“Then much must go a longer way,” said the earl.

There was nothing remarkable in the words, yet he spoke them apparently with something of the same kind of difficulty with which a man accustomed both to speak, and to weigh the words he uses, might upon occasion find in clothing a new thought to his satisfaction. The effort seemed to have tried him, and he took a sip of wine, as indeed Donal soon found he did for a time after every briefest sentence he uttered : it was but a sip — nothing like a mouthful.

Donal murmured something to the effect that the highest duty must be the pleasantest action ; and that Davie, of all the boys he had had to teach, was by far the easiest to get on, and that because his moral nature was the most teachable.

“ You greatly gratify me, Mr. Grant,” said the earl. “ I have long wished to find such a man as I see you are, for my poor boy. I wish I had found you when Forgue was preparing for college — but you could not then have been prepared for such a charge.”

“ True, my lord ; I was at that time at college myself in the winter, and the rest of the year helping my father with his sheep, or working on his master’s farm.”

“ Yes, yes, I remember ! you told me something of your history before. You Scotch peasants are a wonderful people !”

“ I am not aware of anything wonderful in us, my lord. But you may rest assured as to Davie, that what I think good I will do for him as long as your lordship gives me the privilege of being with him.”

“ I wish that might be the measure of his privilege,” said his lordship. “ But you cannot be a tutor always. You must be soon entering on some more important sphere of labor ! Doubtless you are in training for the church ?”

“ My lord, I have no such goal in my eye.”

“ What !” cried his lordship almost eagerly ; “ you cannot intend to give up your life to teaching — though it may be a right noble calling ! — You would then, of course be a schoolmaster ? I have one such position almost in my gift.”

“ My lord,” returned Donal, “ I never trouble

about my future. I have got on very well as yet without doing so, and I have no intention of lading the mule of the Present with the camel-load of the Future. I will take what comes — what is sent me, that is. I have much to be thankful for that my work occupies me with books and thoughts instead of figures and facts. I have no work to do that I do not like.”

“You are right, Mr. Grant, and if I were in your position, I should endeavor to think just as you do. But, alas, I have never had any freedom of choice !”

“Perhaps only your lordship has not chosen to choose,” Donal was on the point of saying, but he thought himself in time not to hazard the remark.

“If I were a rich man, Mr. Grant,” the earl continued, “which it may sound strange to you to hear me say I am not, but which is nevertheless true, for as every one about here knows, not an acre of the property belongs to me, or goes with the title. Davie, dear boy, will have nothing but a thousand or two. Lord Fergie, will, however, be well provided for by the marriage I have in view for him.”

“I hope there will be some love in it,” said Donal uneasily.

“I had no intention,” returned his lordship, with cold politeness, “of troubling you concerning Lord Fergie. You are of course interested only in your pupil Davie.”

“I beg your pardon, my lord,” said Donal; and his lordship immediately resumed his former condescendingly friendly, half sleepy tone of conversation.

“Yes, Davie, poor boy — he is my anxiety ! What to do with him, I have not yet succeeded in determining. If the Church of Scotland were Episcopal

now, we might put him into that: he would be an honor to it! But alas! where there are positively no dignities, it would not be fair to one of his birth and social position to tie him down to a few shabby hundreds a year and the associations he would necessarily be thrown into—however honorable the thing in itself!” he added, with a bow to Donal, apparently unable to get it out of his head that he was a clergyman in prospect at least and purpose.

“Davie is not quite a man yet,” said Donal; “and by the time he begins to think of a profession, he will, I trust, be a good deal fitter to make a choice than he is now: the boy has a great deal of common sense. If your lordship will pardon me, I cannot help thinking there is no need for your lordship to trouble yourself about him—at least not before some liking or preference begins to show itself.”

“Ah, it is very well for one in your position to speak in that way, Mr. Grant. Men like you are free to choose; you may make your bread as you please. But men in ours are greatly limited in their choice; the paths open to them are few. They are compelled to follow in certain tracks. You are free, I say; we are not. Tradition oppresses us. We are slaves to the dead and buried. I could well wish I had been born in your humbler but in truth less contracted sphere. Certain careers are hardly open to you, to be sure, but the vision of your life in the open air, following your sheep, and dreaming all things beautiful and grand in the world beyond you—none of which are to be found on a nearer view—is entrancing. That is the life to make a poet!”

“Or a king,” thought Donal, “to be more remem-

bered than all of them! But the earl would have made but a discontented shepherd," he thought, for the man who is not content where he is would never have been content somewhere else, though he might have liked it better.

"Take another glass of wine, Mr. Grant," said his lordship, filling his own from the other decanter. "Try this, I believe you will like it better than the other. This is Madeira—a wine that threatens to forsake the earth forever."

"In truth, my lord," answered Donal, "I have drunk so little that I do not know one wine from another."

"You know good whiskey better, eh? would you like some now? Just touch the bell behind you."

"No, thank you, my lord; I know as little about whiskey; my mother would never let us even taste it, and I never have tasted it—strange as it may appear."

"But don't you think it is a pity to limit the scope of life by too much self-denial? Every new taste is a gain to the being."

"I suspect, however, that a new appetite is only a loss."

As he said this, Donal half mechanically filled a glass from the decanter which his host pushed towards him.

"I should like you," resumed his lordship, after a short pause, "to keep your eyes open to the fact that Davie must do something for himself, and let me know by and by what you think him fit for."

"I will with pleasure, my lord. Tastes may not be infallible guides to what is good for us, but they may conduct us to the knowledge of what we are fit

for — whether that be fit for us remaining still a question.”

“Extremely well said!” returned the earl.

“Shall I try how he takes to trigonometry — for land survey and measuring? There is a good deal to do in that way now. Gentlemen are now beginning to take charge of the lands of their more favored relatives. There is Mr. Graeme, your own factor, my lord — a relative, I understand.”

“A distant one, I believe,” answered his lordship with marked coldness. “The degree of relationship is hardly to be counted.”

“In the Lowlands, my lord, you do not care to count kin so far as we do in the Highlands. My heart warms of itself to the word kinsman.”

“You have not found kinship so awkward as I have, possibly!” said his lordship, with a watery smile. “The man in humble position may allow the claim of kin to any extent: he has nothing, therefore nothing can be got from him! But the man who has, or, which is as bad, indeed a good deal worse, who is supposed to have, would soon be the poorest of the clan if he gave to every needy relation that turned up.”

“I never knew the man so poor,” answered Donal, “that he had nothing to give. But the things the poor have to give would hardly be to the purpose of the mere predatory relative.”

“Predatory relative! it is a good phrase,” said his lordship with a sleepy laugh, though his eyes were wide open. His lips did not seem to care to move, yet he looked pleased. — “To tell you the truth,” he begun again, “at one period of my history I gave

and gave till I was tired of giving ; it was just as unsatisfactory as possession. Ingratitude was the sole return. At one time I had large possessions — larger than I like to think of now. If I had the tenth part of what I have given away, I should not now be uneasy concerning Davie's future."

"There is no fear of Davie, my lord, so long as he is brought up with the idea that he must work for his bread."

His lordship made no answer, and Donal saw that his look was of one far away from the present. A moment more, and he rose and began to pace the room. An indescribable something that suggested an invisible and yet luminous cloud seemed to hover about his forehead and eyes, which if not fixed on very vacancy itself, appeared to have got somewhere in the neighborhood of it. At length the fourth or fifth turn he opened the door by which he had entered, and as he did so he went on with something he had begun to say to Donal — of which although Donal heard every word, and seemed on the point of understanding something, he had not yet caught any sense when his lordship disappeared. But as he went on talking, and kept up the tone of one conversing with his neighbor, Donal thought it his part to follow him, and found himself in his lordship's bedroom. But out of this his lordship had already gone, through an opposite door ; and Donal still following was presently where he had never been before — in an old picture gallery, of which he had heard Davie speak, but which the earl kept private for his exercise indoors. It was a long narrow place, hardly in width more than a corridor, and to Donal nowhere appearing to afford

distance enough for seeing any picture properly. But he could ill judge, for the sole light in the place came from the fires and candles in the rooms whose doors they had left open behind them, and just a faint glimmer from the vapor buried moon, sufficing to show the outline of window after window, and revealing something of the great length of the gallery. By the time Donal caught sight of the earl, he was some distance down, holding straight on into the long dusk, and still talking.

“This is my favorite promenade,” he said, as if brought a little to himself by the sound of Donal’s overtaking steps. “After dinner, always, Mr. Grant, wet weather or dry, still or stormy, I walk here. What do I care for the weather! It will be time when I am old to consult the barometer!”

Donal wondered a little: there seemed no great hardihood in the worst of weathers to go pacing a picture-gallery, where the worst storm that ever blew could reach one only with little threads through the chinks of windows and doors—which were all double. “Yes,” his lordship went on, “I taught myself hardship in my boyhood, and I now reap the fruits of it in the prime of life.—Come here! I will show you a prospect unequalled.”

He stopped in front of a large picture and began to talk as if an expatiation upon the points of a real landscape outspread before him. His remarks belonged to something magnificent; but whether they were applicable to the picture Donal could not tell; there was light enough only to return to a faint gleam from its gilded frame.

“Reach beyond reach!” said his lordship; “end-

less! infinite! how would not poor Turner, with his ever vain attempt at the unattainable, have gloated on such a scene! In nature alone you front success! She does what she means! She alone does what she means!”

“If,” said Donal, more for the sake of confirming the earl’s impression that he had a listener than from any idea that he in turn would listen —“If you mean that the object of Nature is to present perfection to our eyes, I cannot allow she does what she means. You rarely see her do anything she would herself call perfect. But if her object be to make us behold perfection with the inner eye, this object she certainly does gain, and that just by stopping short of” —

He did not finish the sentence.

A sudden change came over him, absorbing him so in its results that for itself he never thought even of trying to account. Something seemed to give way in his head, — as if a bubble burst in his brain; and from that moment whatever the earl said, and whatever arose in his own mind, seemed to have outward existence as well. He heard and knew the voice of his host, but seemed also in some inexplicable way, which at the time occasioned him no surprise, to see the things which had their being only in the brain of the earl. Whether he went in very deed out with him into the night, he did not know — he felt as if he had gone, but thought he had not — but when he woke the next morning in his own bed at the top of the tower, to which he had some memory of climbing, he was as weary as if he had been walking all the night through.

CHAPTER XV.

A THING TO BE ASHAMED OF.

HIS first thought was of a long and delightful journey he had made on horseback in the company of the earl, through scenes of entrancing interest and variety, but the present result was a strange sense of weariness, almost of misery. What had befallen him to account for this? Was the thing a fact or a fancy? If a fancy, how was he so weary? If a fact, how could it have been? Had he indeed been the earl's companion through such a long night as it seemed? Had they visited so many places as the remembrance of lingered in his brain? He was so confused, so bewildered, so haunted with a kind of shadowy misery—undefined yet plainly felt, that it seemed almost as if a man might lose hold of himself so as no more to be certain he had ever possessed or could ever possess himself with confidence again. Nothing like it had he ever experienced before. At last he bethought himself that, as he had been so little accustomed to wine, or any kind of strong drink, he must have inadvertently taken more than his head could stand. Yet he remembered leaving his glass unemptied to follow the earl, and certainly it was some time after that before the something came on that made of him a man beside himself! Could it really have been drunken-

ness? Had it been slowly coming on without his knowing it? He could hardly believe it. Whatever it was, it had left him unhappy, almost ashamed. What would the earl think of him? He must have come to the conclusion that such a man was unfit any longer to take charge of his son! He would lead him into all kinds of evil who was unable to command himself. For his own part he did not feel that he was to blame, but rather that an accident had befallen him. Whence then this feeling akin to shame? Why should he be ashamed of any accident permitted to come upon him? Of that shame he had to be ashamed, as of a lack of faith in God! How could any accident whatever injure him? Would God leave his creature who trusted in him at the mercy of a chance—of a glass of wine taken in ignorance? *There* was a thing to be ashamed of, and with good cause!

He got up, and found to his dismay that it was almost ten o'clock—his hour for rising in winter being six. He dressed in haste, and went down, wondering that Davie had not come to see after him.

In the schoolroom he found Davie waiting for him. The boy sprang up, and darted to meet him.

“I hope you are better, Mr. Grant,” he said. “I am so glad you are able to come down!”

“I am quite well,” answered Donal. “I can’t think what made me sleep so long! Why didn’t you come and wake me, Davie, my boy?”

“Because Simmons told me you were not well, and I must not disturb you, if you were ever so late in coming down to breakfast.”

“I hardly deserve any breakfast!” rejoined Donal;

“but if you will stand by me, and read while I take my coffee, we shall save a little time so.”

“Yes, sir. But your coffee must be quite cold! I will ring.”

“No, no; I must not waste any more time. A man who cannot drink cold coffee ought to come down while it is hot.”

“Forgue won't drink cold coffee!” said Davie; “I don't see why you should.”

“Because I prefer to do with the coffee as I please — not to have hot coffee for my master. I won't have it anything to me what humor the coffee may be in. I will be Donal Grant, whether the coffee be cold or hot. There is a bit of practical philosophy for you, Davie!”

“I think I understand you, sir: you would not have a man make a fuss about trifles.”

“Not if it be really a trifle. The co-relative of a trifle, Davie, is a smile. But I would make no end of fuss about many things that are called trifles, Davie, if there is a point in the trifle that is the egg of an *ought*. I would not have myself care whether this or that is nice; but I would have myself care not to care. It is a point of honor with us highlanders never to care what sort of dinner we have, but to eat as heartily of bread and cheese as of roast beef. That is what my father and mother used to teach me, though I fear that point in good manners is going out of fashion even with highlanders.”

“It is good manners!” said Davie decidedly; “and more than good manners; I should count it grand not to care what kind of dinner I had. But I'm afraid it is more than I shall ever come to.”

“You will never come to it by trying because it is grand. Only, mind, I did not say we were not to enjoy our roast beef more than our bread and cheese; that would be not to discriminate where there is a difference. Wherever there is a difference we ought to recognize the difference. If bread and cheese were just as good to us as roast beef, there would be no victory in our contentment.”

“I see!” said Davie. — “Wouldn’t it be well to put one’s self in training then, Mr. Grant, to be able to do without things?”

“It is much better to do the lessons set you by one who knows how to teach than to pick lessons for yourself out of your books. I tell you what, Davie: I have not that confidence in myself to think I would make a good teacher of myself.”

“But you make a good teacher of me, sir.”

“I try — but then I’m set to teach you, and I am not set to teach myself: I am only set to make myself do what I am taught. When you are my teacher, Davie — at skating, or anything else that may turn up, which you understand better than I do, I try — don’t I — to do everything you tell me?”

“Yes, indeed, sir!”

“But I am not set to be my own teacher.”

“No; nor any one else: you do not need any one to be your teacher, sir.”

“Oh, don’t I, Davie! On the contrary, I could not get on for one solitary moment without somebody to teach me. Look you here, Davie: I have so many lessons given me, that I have no time or need to add to them any of my own. If you were to ask the cook to let you have a cold dinner, you would perhaps eat

it with pride, and take credit for what your hunger made quite agreeable to you. But the man who does not grumble when he is told not to go out because it is raining and he has a cold, will not grumble either when he finds his dinner is not quite so nice as he would like it to be."

Davie hung his head. It had been a very small grumble, but there are no sins for which there is less reason or less excuse than small ones; in no sense are they worth committing. And we grown people commit many more of such than little children do, and have our regard in childishness and the loss of childlikeness.

"It is so easy," continued Donal, "to do the thing we ordain ourselves, for in holding to that, we make ourselves out fine fellows; and that is such a mean kind of a thing! And then when another who has the right lays a thing upon us, we grumble, though it be the truest and kindest thing, and the most reasonable and needful for us — even for our dignity — for our being worth anything! I don't think we should ever do it had we any true idea of the place such things come from — the place where they come into being, I mean. Depend upon it, Davie, to do what we are told is a far grander thing than to lay the severest rules upon ourselves — ay, and to stick to them too!"

"But might there not be something good for us to do that we were not told of?"

"Whoever does the thing he is told to do — the thing, that is, that has a plain *ought* in it, will soon be satisfied that there is one who will not forget to tell him what must be done as soon as he is fit to do it."

The conversation had lasted only while Donal ate his breakfast, with the little fellow standing beside him, and it was now over, but not likely to be forgotten. For the readiness of the boy to do what his master told him was rare — and a great help and comfort — sometimes a rousing rebuke to his master, whose thoughts would, when they turned to the past, sometimes tumble into one of the pitfalls of sorrow.

“What!” he would say to himself, “am I so believed in by this child, that he goes at once to do my words, and shall I for a moment doubt the heart of the father, or his power or will to set right whatever may have seemed to go wrong with his child! Go on, Davie!” he would say to himself; “you are a good boy: I will be a better man!”

But naturally now, as soon as lessons were over, he fell again to thinking what could have befallen him the night before. The earl must have taken notice of it, for surely Simmons had not given Davie those injunctions of himself — except indeed he had exposed his condition even to him! At what point did the aberration, whatever was its nature, begin! If the earl had spoken to Simmons, then kindness seemed to have been intended him; but it might have been merely care over the boy himself, that his feeling towards his tutor should not receive a shock. What was to be done?

He did not ponder the matter long. With that directness which was one of the most marked features of his nature, he resolved at once to request an interview with the earl, and make his apologies, explaining the mishap as the result of ignorance arising from inexperience in the matter of strong drinks. As soon,

therefore, as his morning's work with Davie was over, he sought Simmons, and found him in the pantry rubbing up the forks and spoons.

"Ah! Mr. Grant," he said, before Donal could speak, "I was just coming to you with a message from his lordship! He wants to see you."

"And I came to you," replied Donal, "to say I wanted to see his lordship."

"That's well fitted, then, sir," returned Simmons. "I will go and see. His lordship is not up, nor likely to be for some hours yet; he is in one of his low fits this morning. He told me *you* were not quite yourself last night."

As he said this his red nose seemed to examine Donal's face with a kindly, but not altogether sympathetic scrutiny.

"The fact is, Simmons," answered Donal, "not being used to wine, I drank more of his lordship's than was good for me."

"His lordship's wine," murmured Simmons, and there checked himself — "how much of it did you drink, sir — if I may ask such a question?"

"I had one glass during dinner, and nearly two glasses after."

"Pooh! pooh, sir! That would never hurt a strong man like you! Look at me!"

But he did not go on with the illustration. "— Tut! That make you sleep till ten o'clock of the day! — If you will kindly wait in the hall, or in the school-room, I will bring you his lordship's orders."

So saying, while he washed his hands, and took off his white apron, Simmons departed on his errand to his lordship's room, while Donal went to the foot of

the grand staircase, and there waited. As he stood he heard a light step above him, and involuntarily glancing up, saw the light shape of Lady Arctura just appearing round the last visible curve of the spiral stair, coming down rather slowly and very softly, as if her feet were thinking. She seemed to check herself for an infinitesimal moment, then immediately moved on again as he stood aside with bended head to let her pass. If she acknowledged his salutation it was with the slightest return, but she lifted her eyes to his face as she passed him with a look that seemed to him to have in it a strange wistful trouble — not very marked, yet notable. She passed on and vanished, leaving that look a lingering presence in Donal's thought. What was it? Was it anything? What could it mean? Had he really seen it? Was it there, or had he only imagined it?

Simmons kept him waiting a good while. He had found his lordship getting up, and had had to stay to help him dress. At length he came, excusing himself that his lordship's temper at such times — that was in his dumpy fits — was not of the evenest, and required a gentle hand. His lordship would see him, and could Mr. Grant find the way himself, for his old bones ached with running up and down those endless stone steps? Donal answered he knew the way, and sprang up the stair. But his mind was more occupied with the coming interview than with his recollection of the way, which caused him to take a wrong turn after leaving the stair; though he had a good gift in space-relations, his instinct within a house was not so keen as on a hillside. The consequence was that he presently found himself in the picture-

gallery. A strange feeling of pain, as if of the presence of a condition he did not wish to encourage awoke in him at the discovery. Having entered it, as he judged, at the farther end, he walked along, as thus taking the readiest to his lordship's apartment. Either he would find him in his bedroom, or could pass through that to his sitting-room. As he passed he glanced at the pictures on the walls, and seemed, strange to say, though, so far as he knew he had never been in the place except in the dark, to recognize some of them as forming parts of the stuff of a dream in which he had been wandering through the night — only that was a glowing and gorgeous dream, whereas these pictures were even commonplace. Here was something to be meditated upon — but for the present postponed! His lordship was waiting for him!

Arrived, as he thought, at the door of the earl's bedroom, a sweet voice, which he knew at once as Lady Arctura's, called to him to enter. It was not the earl's chamber, but a lovely though gloomy little room, in which sat the lady writing at a carved table of black oak. Even in that moment Donal could not help feeling how much better it would have been for the thought-oppressed girl to have a room where the sunshine had free entrance and play: a fire blazed cheerfully in the old-fashioned grate, but there was only one low lattice window, and that to the west. She looked up, her face expressing literally nothing: she seemed no more surprised to see him there than if he had been a servant she had rung for.

"I beg your pardon, my lady," he said; "my lord wished to see me, but I find I have lost my way, and taken your door for that of his room."

"I will show you the way," said Lady Arctura gently, and rising came to him.

Then, as he turned, Donal saw that here the gallery, instead of ending, took a sharp turn, and he was still at some distance from the earl's bedroom. Lady Arctura, however, did not take him farther along the gallery, but through a door into a winding narrow passage by which she brought him within sight of the door of his lordship's sitting-room. She pointed it out to him, and turned away—again, Donal could not help thinking, with a look as of some slight anxiety that had to do with himself. He knocked once more, and the voice of the earl told him to enter.

His lordship was in his dressing-gown, stretched on a couch of faded satin of a gold color, against which his pale yellow face looked cadaverous.

"Good-morning, Mr. Grant!" he said. "I'm glad to see you better."

"I thank you, my lord," returned Donal. "You were kind enough to wish to see me: I was very desirous of seeing your lordship. I have to make an apology. I cannot understand how it was, except that I have been so little accustomed to strong drink of any sort that"—

"There is not the smallest occasion to say a word," interrupted his lordship. "Believe me, you did not once forget yourself, or cease to behave like a gentleman."

"Your lordship is very kind. Still I cannot help being sorry. I shall take good care in future."

"It *might* be as well," conceded the earl, "to set yourself a limit—necessarily in your case a narrow

one. Some constitutions are so immediately responsive!" he added in a murmur. "The least exhibition of! — But a man like you, Mr. Grant," he went on aloud, "will always know how to take care of himself!"

"Sometimes, apparently, when it is too late!" rejoined Donal. "But I must not annoy your lordship with any further expression of my regret!"

"Will you dine with me again to-night?" said the earl. "I am lonely now, and may well be glad of such a companion! Sometimes, for months together, I feel no need of one: my books and pictures content me. Then all at once a longing for society will seize me, and that longing my health will not permit me to indulge. I am not by nature unsociable — much the contrary indeed. You may wonder that I do not admit my own family more freely; but they are young and foolish; and my wretched health causes me to shrink from the loud voices and abrupt motions of mere lads."

"But Lady Arctura!" thought Donal. "Your lordship will find me but a poor substitute, I fear," he said, "for the society you would prefer. But what I am is at your lordship's service."

As he spoke Donal could not help turning his mind with a moment's longing and regret to his nest in the tower and the company of his books and his thoughts: these were to him far preferable to any of the social elements offered him as yet by his host.

"Then come this evening and dine with me."

Donal promised.

In the evening he went as before, was conducted by the butler, and formally announced. With the

earl, to his surprise, he found Lady Arctura. The earl made him give her his arm, and himself followed.

It was to Donal a very different dinner from that of the evening before. Whether the presence of his niece made the earl rouse himself to be agreeable, or he had grown better since the morning and his spirits had risen, certainly he was not like the same man. He talked in a rather ponderously playful way, told two or three good stories, described with vivacity some of the adventures of his youth, spoke of several great men he had met, and in short was all that could be desired of a host. Donal took no wine during dinner, and the earl as before took very little, Lady Arctura none. She listened respectfully to her uncle's talk, and was attentive when Donal spoke: he thought she looked even sympathetic once or twice, and once he unwittingly surprised upon her face the same look as of anxiety that he had seen there that day twice before. It was strange, he thought, that, not seeing her sometimes for a week together, he should thus have met her three times in the same day. When the last of the dinner was removed and the wine placed on the table, his lordship looked to Donal's eyes as if he expected his niece to go; but she kept her place. He asked her which wine she would take, but she declined any. He filled his glass, and passed the decanter to Donal. He too filled his glass, and drank it slowly.

Talk revived, but Donal could not help fancying that the eyes of the lady now and then sought his with a sort of question in them — almost as if she feared something might be going to happen him. He attributed it to her having heard that he had taken

too much the night before, and felt the situation rather unpleasant. He must, however, brave it out! When he refused a second glass, which the earl by no means pressed upon him, he thought he saw her look relieved; but once again he saw or fancied he saw her glance at him with the same expression of slight anxiety.

In the course of the talk they came upon sheep, and Donal was telling them some of his experiences with them and their dogs, himself greatly interested in the subject, when all at once, just as before, something seemed to burst in his head, and immediately, although he knew that he was sitting at the table with the earl and Lady Arctura, he could not be certain that he was not at the same time upon the side of a lonely hill, closed in a magic night of high summer, his woolly and hairy friends lying all about him, and a light glimmering faintly on the heather a little way off, which he knew for the flame that comes from the feet of the angels when they touch ever so lightly the solid earth. He seemed to be reading the thoughts of his sheep as he had never been able to do before, yet all the time he went on talking and knew that he was talking to the earl and the lady.

At length he found everything about him changed, and he was all but certain that he was no longer in their company, but alone, and outside the house—walking, indeed, swiftly through the park, in a fierce wind from the northeast, battling with which he seemed to be ruling it like a fiery horse. Presently came in hoarse, terrible music, the thunderous beat of the waves on the low shore. He felt it through his feet, as one feels without hearing the low tones of

an organ for which the building is too small to allow the natural vibration. The waves seemed to make the ground beat against the soles of his feet as he walked, and soon he heard it like an infinitely prolonged roaring music on a sky-built organ. It was drawing him to the sea, whether in the body or out of the body he could not have told: he was but conscious of certain forms of existence—that was all: whether those forms had an existence and relation to other things outside of him, or whether they belonged only to the world within him, he did not know. The roaring of the great water-organ grew louder and louder. He knew every step of the way across the fields and over the fences to the shore, turning this way and that, to avoid here a ditch, there a deep sandy patch where walking was difficult. And still the music grew louder and louder—and at length came the driving spray in his face. It was the flying touch of the wings on which the tones went hurrying past into the depths of awful distances! His feet were now wading through the bent-covered sand, with the hard, bare, wave-beaten sand a little in front of him. Through the darkness he could see the white fierceness of the hurrying waves as they rushed to the shore, leaning, toppling, curling, self undermined, to hurl forth all the sound that was in them on a falling roar of defeat. Every wave was a complex chord, with winnowed tones feathering it round. He paced up and down the sand—it seemed to him for ages. Why he paced there he did not know—why always he turned and went back instead of going on. Suddenly he thought he saw something dark in the hollow of a wave, that swept to its fall. The moon

came out as it broke, and the something appeared rolled on before it up the shore. Donal stood watching it. Why should he move? What was it to him? The next wave would reclaim it for the ocean! It looked like the body of a man, but what did it matter? Many such were tossed in the hollows of that music! But something seemed to come back to him out of the ancient years; in the ages gone by men did what they could! There was a word they used to use; they said they ought to do this or that. This body might not be dead—or dead, some one would like to have it; he rushed into the water and caught it ere the next wave broke, though hours of cogitation and ratiocination seemed to have passed. The breaking wave drenched him from head to foot, but he clung to his prize, and dragged it out. A moment's bewilderment, and he came to himself sitting on the sand with his arms round a tangled net lost from some fishing-boat. His delusion was gone. He was sitting in a cold wind, and wet to the skin, upon the border of a fierce stormy sea. A poor, shivering, altogether ordinary and uncomfortable mortal, he sat on the shore of the German Ocean, from which he had rescued a tangled mass of net mixed with seaweed. He dragged it up out of the reach of the waves, and set out for home; and by the time he reached the castle he had got quite warm. His own door at the foot of the tower was open, he crept up to bed, and was soon fast asleep.

He was not so late as before the next day, and before he had finished his breakfast had made up his mind that he must beware of the earl. He was sat-

isfied that such could not be the consequences of one glass of wine. If he asked him again, he would again go to dinner with him, but he would take no wine.

School was just over when Simmons came to him from his lordship, to inquire after him, and ask him to dine with him again that evening. Donal immediately consented.

This time Lady Arctura was not there. After, as during dinner, Donal declined to drink. His lordship cast on him a very keen and searching glance, but it was only a glance, and took no further notice of his refusal. After that, however, the conversation which had not been brilliant from the first, sank and sank till it was not; and after a cup of coffee, his lordship, remarking that he was not feeling so well as usual, begged Donal to excuse him and proceeded to retire. Donal rose, and expressing a hope that his lordship would have a good night and feel better in the morning, left the room.

The passage outside was lighted only by a rather dim lamp, and in the distance Donal saw what he could but distinguish as the form of a woman standing by the door which opened upon the great staircase. He supposed it at first to be one of the maids; but the servants were so few compared with the size of the castle that one was seldom to be met on any of the stairs or in any of the passages, and besides the form was standing as if waiting for some one! Drawing near, he saw it was Lady Arctura, and would have passed her with an obeisance. But ere he could lay his hand on the lock, hers was there to prevent him. He then saw that she was agitated,

and that she stopped him thus because her voice had at the moment failed her. The next, however, she recovered it, and with it her self-possession.

“Mr. Grant,” she said in a low voice, “I wish to speak to you—if you will allow me.”

“I am at your service, my lady,” answered Donal.

“But we cannot here! My uncle”—

“Shall we go into the picture gallery?” suggested Donal; “there is moonlight there.”

“No; that is still too near my uncle. His hearing is sometimes preternaturally keen; and besides, as you know, he often walks there after his evening meal. But—excuse me, Mr. Grant—you will understand me presently—are you—are you quite”—

“You mean, my lady, am I quite myself this evening!” said Donal, wishing to help her with the embarrassing question, and speaking in the tone she had taken; I have drunk no wine to-night.”

With that she opened the door, and descended the stair, he following; but as soon as the curve of the staircase hid the door she stopped, and turning to him said,

“I would not have you mistake me, Mr. Grant, I should be ashamed to speak to you if”—

“Indeed I am very sorry,” said Donal, “though hardly so much to blame as I fear you think me.”

“There! you mistake me at once. You suppose I think you took too much wine last night! That would be absurd! I saw what you took well enough! But we must not talk here. Come!”

She turned again, and went down the stair, and led the way straight to the housekeeper’s room.

There they found her darning a stocking.

“Mrs. Brooks,” said Lady Arctura, “I want to have a little talk with Mr. Grant, and I did not know where to take him: there is no fire in the library. May we sit here?”

“By all means; pray sit down, my lady. Why, child! you look as cold as if you had been out on the roof! There! sit close to the fire! you are all of a tremble!”

Lady Arctura obeyed like the child Mrs. Brooks called her, and sat down in the chair given to her.

“I’ve got something to see to in the still-room,” said Mrs. Brooks. “You sit there and have your talk. Sit down, Mr. Grant. I’m glad to see you and my lady come to word of mouth at last. I began to think you never would!”

Had Donal been in the way of looking at his fellow for the sake of interpreting his words, he would now have seen a shadow sweep over Lady Arctura’s face, followed by a flush, and would have attributed it to displeasure at the words of the housekeeper. But, with all his experience of the world within, and all his unusually developed power of entering into the feelings of others, he had never come to pry into these feelings, or to study their phenomena for the sake of possessing himself of the knowledge of them. Man was by no means an open book to him, — “no, nor woman neither.” He would have scorned to hasten or supplement by investigation what a lady chose to reveal to him. So now he sat looking into the fire, with an occasional upward glance, waiting for what was to come, and saw neither shadow nor flush. Lady Arctura also sat for some time gazing into the fire, and seemed in no haste to begin.

“You are so good to Davie!” she said at length, and stopped.

“No better than I have to be,” returned Donal. “Not to be good to Davie would be to be a wretch.”

“You know, Mr. Grant, I cannot agree with you!”

“There is no immediate occasion, my lady.”

“But I suppose one may be fair to another,” she said as if doubting, “and it is only fair to confess that he is much more manageable since you came. Only that is no good if it does not come from a good source.”

“Grapes do not come from thorns, my lady. That would be to allow in evil a power of working good.” To this she did not reply.

“He minds everything I say to him now,” she resumed presently. “What is it that makes him so good? — I wish I had such a tutor!”

She stopped again. She had spoken out of the simplicity of her thought, but the words looked as if they ought not to have been said.

“What can have passed in her?” thought Donal. “She is so different! Her very voice is so different!”

“But that is not what I wanted to speak to you about, Mr. Grant,” she resumed, “though I did want you to know I was aware of the improvement in Davie. I wanted to say something about my uncle.”

Here followed another pause — embarrassing to the reticent lady — not at all to the profluent Donal, who sat waiting in perfect quiescence.

“You may have remarked,” she said at length, “that, though we live together, and he is the head of the house as my guardian, there is not much communication between us.”

“I have gathered as much. I cannot tell Davie not to talk to me.”

“Of course not.—Lord Morven is a very strange man. I cannot pretend to understand him, and I do not want either to judge him or to set him out to the judgment of another. I can only speak of a certain fact concerning yourself which I do not feel at liberty to keep from you.”

Once more a pause followed. Though perfectly ladylike, there was nothing now of the grand superior about Arctura. There was plain evidence of the sweet girl-nature in her. She was perplexed.

“Has nothing occurred to yourself?” she said at length, abruptly. “Have you not suspected him of trying experiments upon you?”

“I have had a very vague undefined ghost of a suspicion that pointed in that direction,” answered Donal. “I suppose he is a dabbler in physiology, and he has a notion in his head he wants to verify! Tell me what you please about it.”

“I should never have known anything about it, though, my room being near his, I should have been the more perplexed about some things, had he not, I do most entirely believe, made a similar experiment with myself a year ago.”

“Is it possible?”

“It may be all a fancy — I don't mean about what he did, of that I am sure — but I do sometimes fancy I have never been so well since. It was a great shock to me when I came to myself — you see I am trusting you, Mr. Grant! You will remember I dared not have done so had I not believed you would be at least as discreet as myself in the matter! I believe

the chief cause of the state of his health is that, for years past, he has been in the habit of taking some horrible drug for the sake of its mental effects. You know there are people who do so. What the drug is I don't know, and I would rather not know. It seems to me just as bad as taking too much wine. He prides himself on his temperance in that respect. But he says nothing of the other thing. I have even heard him, in conversation with Mr. Carmichael, make the remark that taking opium is worse than getting drunk, for opium destroys the moral sense much more than whisky or anything of that kind. I don't say my uncle takes opium: I have heard there are other things, even worse, that people take."

"And he dared to give it to you — whatever it was!" said Donal with indignation.

"I am sure he gave me something. For once that I dined with him — but I cannot describe to you the strange effect what he gave me had upon me. I think he wanted to watch the effect of it on one who knew nothing of what she had taken. They say the effect of such things is a pleasant one upon most people, at least until they have indulged in it for some time, but for my part I found it very different. I would not go through such agonies again for the world!"

She ceased. Donal saw that she was struggling with a painful remembrance. He hastened to speak.

"Thank you heartily, my lady, for your warning. It was because of such a suspicion that this evening I did not even taste wine. If I have not taken any of the drug in something else, I am safe from the insanity — I can call it nothing less — that has possessed me the last two nights."

“Was it very dreadful?” asked Lady Arctura.

“On the contrary, it gave me a feeling of innate faculty such as I could never have conceived of.”

“Oh, Mr. Grant! do take care. Do not be tempted to take it again. I don't know what it might not have led me to do if I had found it pleasant; for I am sorely tried with painful thoughts: I feel sometimes I would do almost anything to get rid of them.”

“There must be a good way of getting rid of them. Think it of God's mercy,” said Donal, “that you cannot get rid of them so.”

“I do; I do!”

“The shield of his presence was over you then.”

“How glad I should be to think so! But we have no right to think so till we believe in Christ — and — it is a terrible thing to say — I don't know that I believe.”

“Whoever taught you that will have to answer for teaching a terrible lie,” said Donal. “Did Christ not do all he could to save the world, and will any one dare to say that God, whose visible presence Christ was, is not doing all he can, with all the power of a maker over the creature he has made, to help and deliver them!”

“I know he makes his sun to shine and his rain to fall upon the good and the bad! but that is only of this world's good things!”

“Do you then — are you able to worship a God who will give you all the little things he does not care much about, but will not do his best for you — will not give you help to do the things he wants you to do, but which you do not know how to do!”

“But there are things he cannot do till we believe in Christ.”

“That is very true. But that does not say that God does not do all that can be done for even the worst of men to help him to believe! He finds it very hard to teach us, but he is never tired of trying. Any one who is willing to be taught of God will be taught, and thoroughly taught by him. People tell such terrible lies about God, judging him by their own foolish selves.”

“I am afraid I am doing wrong in listening to you, Mr. Grant! I do wish what you say might be true, but are you not in danger — you will pardon me for saying it — of presumption: how could all the good people be wrong?

“Because the greater part of the teachers among them have always set themselves more to explain God than to obey him. The gospel is given not to redeem our understandings, but our hearts; that done, and only then, our understandings will be free. Our Lord said he had many things to tell his disciples, but they were not able to hear them. If the things be true which I have heard from Sunday to Sunday in church since I came here, then I say, the Lord brought us no salvation at all, but only a change of shape to our miseries. It has not redeemed you, Lady Arctura, and never will. Nothing but Christ himself for your very own teacher and friend and brother, not all the doctrines about him, even if every one of them were true, can save you. When we poor orphan children, cannot find our God, they would have us take instead a something that is not God at all — but a very bad caricature of him!”

“But how should wicked men know that such is not the true God?”

“If a man desires God, he cannot help knowing enough of him to be capable of learning more. His idea of him cannot be all wrong. But that does not make him fit to teach others all about him — only to go on to learn for himself. But Jesus Christ is the very God I want. I want a father like him, like the father of him who came as our big brother to take us home. No other than the God exactly like Christ can be the true God. Cast away from you that doctrine of devils, that Jesus died to save us from our father. There is no safety, no good of any kind but with the father, his father and our father, his God and our God.”

“But you must allow that God hates and punishes sin — and that is a terrible thing.”

“It would be ten times more terrible if he did not hate and punish it. Do you think Jesus came to deliver us from the punishment of our sins? He would not have moved a step for that. The terrible thing is to be bad, and all punishment is to help to deliver us from it, nor will it cease till we have given up being bad. God will have us good; and Jesus works out the will of his father. Where is the refuge of the child who fears his father? — Where is that, my lady? In the farthest corner of the room? Down in the dungeon of the castle?”

“No, no!” cried Lady Arctura; “in his father’s arms!”

“There!” said Donal, and was silent. “I hold by Jesus!” he added after a pause, and rose as he said it, but stood where he rose. Lady Arctura sat

motionless, divided between the reverence she felt for distorted and false forms of truth taught her from her earliest years, and her desire after a God whose very being is the bliss of his creatures. Some time passed in silence, and then she too rose to depart. She held out her hand to him with a kind of irresolute motion, then suddenly smiled and said, "I wish I might ask you something. I know it is a rude question, but if you could see all, you would answer me, and let the offence go."

"I will answer you anything you choose to ask."

"That makes it the more difficult, but I *will* ask it; I cannot bear to remain longer in doubt; did you really write that poem you gave to Kate Graeme—compose it, I mean, your own self?"

"I made no secret of the authorship when I gave it her," said Donal, not perceiving her drift.

"Then you did really write it?"

Donal looked at her in perplexity. Her face grew very red, and the tears began to come in her eyes.

"You must pardon me," she said. "I am so ignorant! And we live in such an out-of-the-way place, that — that it seems so unlikely a real poet —! And then I have been told there are people who have a passion for appearing to do the thing they are not able to do! and I was anxious to be sure! And my mind kept brooding over it, and longing so to be sure! — so I resolved at last that I would, even at the risk of offending you, be rid of the doubt. I know I have been rude — unpardonably rude, but" —

"But," supplemented Donal, with a most sympathetic smile, for he understood her as his own thought, "you do not feel quite sure yet! Why, what *a priori*

reason can there be why I should not be able to write verses? Is it because I happen to be in what you call an out-of-the-way place? There is no rule as to where poetry grows. One place is as good as another for that."

"I hope you will forgive me! I hope I have not offended you very much!"

"Nobody in such a world as this ought to be offended at being asked for proof. Granted there are in it rogues that look like honest men, how is any one without a special gift of insight, to be sure of the honest man? Even the men whom women love best, sometimes prove the falsest, and tear their hearts to pieces! I will give you all the proof you can desire. And lest you should think I made up the proof itself between now and to-morrow morning" —

"O, Mr. Grant! spare me. I am not, indeed I am not so bad as that!"

"Who can tell when or where the doubt may wake again, or what may wake it?" said Donal.

"At least let me explain a little before you go," she said.

"Certainly," he answered, reseating himself, in compliance with her example.

"Miss Graeme told me that you had never seen a garden like that before."

"I certainly never did. There are none such, I fancy in our part of the country."

"Nor in our neighborhood either."

"Then what is there surprising in that?"

"Nothing in that. But is there not something surprising in your being able to write a poem like that about such a garden, as if you had been from

childhood familiar with the look of it, and so had grown able to enter into the very spirit and heart of the place?"

"Perhaps if I had been familiar with the kind of thing from childhood, it might have just disabled me from seeing the spirit of it. The only two things necessary are, first, that there should be a spirit in the place, and next that the place should be beheld by one who has a spirit capable of giving house room to the spirit of the place. — Does it seem to you that the ghost-lady feels the place all right?"

"I do not quite know what you mean; but I seemed to feel the grass with her feet as I read, and the wind lifting my hair. It seems to me so natural!"

"Now tell me were you ever a ghost?"

"No."

"Did you ever see a ghost?"

"No, never."

"Then how do you know that all that is natural?"

"I see! I cannot answer you."

Donal rose.

"I am indeed ashamed of giving you so much trouble," said Lady Arctura.

"Ashamed of giving me the chance of proving myself a true man?"

"It is no longer necessary."

"But I want my revenge. As a punishment for doubting one whom you had so little ground for believing, you shall be compelled to see the proof — that is if you will do me the favor to wait here till I come back. I shall not be long, but it is some small distance from here to the top of the north tower."

“Davie told me it was there they had put you ; do you like it? Do you not find it very cold? It must be terribly lonely! Do you ever hear anything? I wonder who it was that had you put there!”

She spoke hurriedly, and without waiting between any of the questions she put for an answer. Donal assured her he could not have had a place more to his mind, and left her to go and fetch his proofs. Before she could well think he had reached the foot of his stair, he was back with a bundle of papers in his hand, which he laid before her on the table.

“There!” he said, “if you will take the trouble to go over these, you will see — hardly the poem as you may have read it, but the process of its growth. First you will find it blocked out rather roughly. Then you will see it copied out — clean at first, but afterwards scored and scored. Above you will see the words I chose instead of the first, and afterwards again rejected, till at last I reached those I have as yet let stand as Miss Graeme has them. I do not believe she doubts the verses being mine, for I am sure she thinks them great rubbish. I hope you don’t — from your having taken such pains to know who wrote them.”

She thought he was satirical, from offence that she had doubted him; he saw her bite her lip and heard a slight sigh as of pain. It went to his heart.

“I did not mean any reflection, believe me, Lady Arctura, on your desire for satisfaction,” he said; “it rather flatters me than otherwise. But is it not strange the heart should be less ready to believe anything that seems worth believing? It seems always easier to doubt! Something must be true: why not

the worthy rather oftener? Why should it be easier to believe hard things of God, for instance, than lovely things? — or that one man should have copied from another than that he should have done a thing himself? Even now, some, set on not believing, would say that I contrived all this appearance of composition in order to lay the more certain claim to that which was not my own! and to that I should have no answer, for the kind of man who says that would hardly take the pains to follow the construction through all its stages. But it will not be a hard work for you, nor, I venture to believe, a bad exercise in logic and analysis, to examine whether or not the genuine growth of the poem be before you in those papers.”

“I shall find it most interesting,” said Lady Arc-tura; “so much I can see already. I never saw anything of the kind before, and had no idea how verses were made. Do all verses take as much labor as is evident here?”

“Some take much more: some none at all. The labor is in getting the husks of expression cleared off the thought, so that it may show for what it is. A man’s whole life may have just ripened him before he begins to die to the generation or rather birth of one vital thought: if he be a thorough workman in words, none of that life-labor will appear in his utterance of the thought — save indeed we should say it is transformed into power manifested in ease. Yes; nor will the labor to say clearly with half-fitting words and poor images, the thing to him clear as daylight, that labor even will not show; it is a labor that obliterates itself.”

At this point Mrs. Brooks, thinking the young people had had time enough for their conference, returned, and the three sat a while, and had a little talk. Then Lady Arctura kissed the housekeeper, and bade her good-night; and Donal presently retired to his aerial chamber, with quite another idea of the lady of the house than he had gathered from the little he had seen of her before: either she had changed or he had misunderstood her; changed presentment she certainly had!

From that time, whether it was that Lady Arctura had previously avoided meeting him, and now did not, or from other causes, Donal and she met much oftener about the place; and now they never passed without a mutual smile and greeting.

The next day but one she brought him back his papers to the schoolroom, and told him she had read every erasure and correction, and could no longer have a doubt, even had she not now perfect confidence in himself, that the man who had written those papers must be the maker of the verses. Donal saw in this yielding of the prejudices implanted in her by the clergyman and his polemic daughter.

“They would probably fail to convince a jury however,” he said, as he rose and went to throw them in the fire.

Divining his intent, she darted after him, and caught them from his hand just in time.

“Let me keep them,” she said, “for my humiliation.”

“Do with them what your ladyship pleases,” said Donal. “They are of no value to me — save indeed as I see you care for them.”

CHAPTER XVI.

FURTHER INTERFERENCE.

IN the bosom of the family in which the elements seem most kindly mixed, there may yet lie brooding some element of discord and disruption, upon which the foreign element capable of setting in motion and developing it, has not yet come to operate. That things are quiet is no proof, only a hopeful sign of essential peace which is harmony. It was no wonder, then, that, in a family of such ill accord as this, where absence of strife was mainly owing to the undeveloped condition of jarring ideas, and where interests had not hitherto been brought near enough to conflict, a volcanic eruption should suddenly shake its ordered frame, and darken its moral atmosphere. Signs of such an outbreak had shown themselves, as we have seen, very soon after Donal had become an inmate of the castle, but the destructive energy seemed to have ceased to assert itself.

Lord Forgue had been for some time on a visit to Edinburgh, had doubtless there been made much of, and had returned with a considerable development of haughtiness and the consciousness of what he would have called independence, which generally in the mouths of the young means in reality subjugation to self, and freedom from the law of liberty. It is often when a man is least satisfied — not with himself but

with his immediate doings — that he is most ready to assert his superiority to the restraints he might formerly have grumbled against, but had not dared to dispute — and even to claim from others the consideration necessary to enable him to keep up a false sense of his own personal standing. But for a while they barely came across each other, and Donal had no occasion to speculate concerning him or his conditions. Lord Forgue kept much to himself so far as the family was concerned — so much that even Davie lamented to his tutor, that Forgue was not half so jolly as he used to be. But from his very love of loyalty, peace, and right, Donal had ere long to take the part of the disrupting foreign element.

For more than a week Eppie had not been to see her grandparents; and as that same week something had prevented Donal also from paying them his usual visit, the old people had naturally become uneasy, and hence one frosty twilight, when the last of the sun lay cold green in the west, Andrew Comin appeared in the kitchen, asking to see Mrs. Brooks. He was kindly received by the servants, among whom Eppie was not present, and Mrs. Brooks, who, though she could not have understood him much, had, partly no doubt already through Donal, a genuine respect for the cobbler, soon came to greet him. She told him she knew no reason why Eppie had failed in visiting them: she would send for her and she must explain for herself. In the meantime she sent to tell Donal as well that Andrew Comin was in the kitchen.

Donal would much rather have had his friend up to his room, but he dreaded giving the old man such

a climb, therefore rose at once and ran down to him. He found him sitting alone, for when Mrs. Brooks came there had been a general resumption of work, and she had just quitted the kitchen.

“Come out, Andrew,” said Donal, as he shook hands with him, “if you’re not tired. It’s a fine night, and we can talk well in the gloamin’.”

Andrew consented with alacrity, and they went out.

On the side of the castle away from the town, the descent was at first by a succession of terraces with steps from the one to the other, the terraces themselves being little flower-gardens. At the bottom of the last of these terraces — after which the ground sloped more gently to the level of the river-bank — and parallel with them, was a double row of trees, and between them a path along all the front of the castle, connecting two little doors in opposite walls. One of them led to some of the offices; the other into a fruit garden which turned the western shoulder of the hill, and found for the greater part a nearly southern exposure. At this time of the year the garden was a lonely enough place, and at this time of the day more than likely to be altogether deserted; thither Donal would lead his friend. Going out by the kitchen-door, they went first into a stable yard, from which descended steps to the castle well, on the level of the second terrace. Thence they arrived by more steps at the mews where in old times the hawks were kept, now rather ruinous though not quite neglected. Here the door in the wall opened on the path between trees which I have mentioned. It was one of the pleasantest walks in the immediate proximity of the castle. And now the first of the steely stars were

shining through the naked rafters of leafless boughs overhead, as Donal and the cobbler came gently talking out of the little door, and stepped into the cathedral aisle of trees. The old man looked up, and gazed for a moment in silence — then said :

“‘The h’avens declare the glory o’ God, an’ the firmament showeth his handy-work.’ I used, when I was a lad, to study astronomy, a wee, i’ the houp o’ better hearin’ what the h’avens declared aboot the glory o’ God; I wad fain un’erstan’ the speech ae day cried across the nicht to the ither. But I was sair disapp’intit. The things the astronomer tellt the semple fowk for whom he was writin’, were varra won’erfu’, but I couldna fin’ i’ my hert ’at they make me think ony mair o’ God nor I did afore. I dinna mean to say they nichtna be competent to work that same in anither, but that wasna my experience o’ them. My hert was some sair at this; for ye see I was set upo’ winnin’ intil the presence o’ him I couldna bide frae, an’ at that time I hadna learnt to gang straucht to him ’at’s the express image o’ ’s person, but aye soucht him throu the philosophy — eh, but it was queer bairnly philosophy! — o’ the guid buiks ’at dwell upo’ the natur’ o’ God and a’ that, an’ his hatred o’ sin an’ a’ that — pairt an’ pairt true, nae doobt. But I wanted God great an’ near, an’ they made him oot sma’; sma’, an’ varra far awa’. Ae nicht, hooever, I was oot by mysel’ upo’ the shore, jist as the stars werè peepin’ oot. An’ it was na as gien they war feart o’ the sun, an’ pleast ’at he was gane, but as gien they war a’ teetin oot to see what had come o’ their Father o’ Lichts. A’ at ance I seemt to come to mysel’, as gien oot o’ some wan-

'erin' delusion o' the faculties. Up I cuist my e'en aboon, an' eh, there was the h'aven as God made it — awfu'! — big an' deep, aye faddomless deep, an' fu' o' the wan'erin' yet steady lights 'at naething can blaw oot but the breath o' his mooth! It gaed awa' up an' up, an' deeper an' deeper; my e'en gaed travellin' awa' an' awa' till it seemed as gien they never could win back to me. A' at ance they drappit frae the lift like a laverock, an' lichtet upo' the horizon, whaur the sea an' the sky met like richteousness an' peace kissin' ane anither, as the psalm says. I canna tell what it was, but jist there whaur the earth an' the sky cam thegither, it was the meetin' o' my earthly sowl wi' God's h'avenly sowl! There was bonny colours, an' bonny lights, an' a bonny grit star hangin' ower 't a', but it was nane o' a' thae things; it was something deeper than a', an' cam to the tap mair nor a'! An' frae that moment I saw — no *hoo* the h'avens declare the glory o' God, but I saw them declarin' o' 't, an' I wantit nae mair. Astronomy for me might sit an' want for a better warl', whaur fowk didna weir oot their shune, an' ither fowk hadna to men' them. For what is the great glory o' God but that, though no man can comprehend him, he comes doon, an' lays his cheek to his man's, an' says til him, 'Eh, my cratur!'"

While the cobbler was thus talking, they had gone the length of the little avenue, and were within less than two trees of the door of the fruit garden, when it opened, and was immediately and hurriedly shut again — not, however, before Donal had seen, as he believed, the form of Eppie. He called her by name, and ran to the door, followed by Andrew; the same

suspicion had struck both of them at once! Donal seized the latch, and would have opened the door, but some one within held it against him, and he heard the noise of an attempt to push the rusty bolt into the staple. He set his strength to it, and forced it open, warding as he entered a blow from his head. Lord Forgue was on the other side of the door, and a little way off stood Eppie trembling. Forgue stood in a fury mingled with dismay, for he knew to what he exposed himself. Donal turned away from him, and said to the girl,

“Eppie, here’s your grandfather come to see after you.”

The cobbler, however, went up to Lord Forgue.

“You’re a young man, my lord,” he said, “and may regard it as folly in an auld man to interfere between you an’ your wull; but I warn you, my lord, that excep’ you cease to carry yourself towards my granddaughter in a manner you would not wish represented to his lordship, your father, he shall be informed of the affair. — Eppie, you come home with me.”

“I will not,” said Eppie, her voice trembling with passion, though which passion it were hard to say; “I am a free woman. I make my own living, and I will not be treated like a child!”

“I will speak to Mrs. Brooks,” said the old man with quiet dignity and self-restraint.

“And make her turn me away!” said Eppie.

She seemed quite changed — bold and determined — was probably relieved that she had no more to play a false part. His lordship stood on one side and said nothing.

“But don't you think, grandfather,” continued Eppie, “that whatever she does, I will go home with you! I will go into lodgings. I have saved a little money, and as I can never get another place if you behave so as to take away my character, I will leave the country altogether.”

Here his lordship, having apparently made up his mind, advanced, and with strained composure said,

“I confess, Mr. Comin, things do look against us. It *is* awkward that you should have found us together, but you know” — and here he attempted a laugh — “we are told not to judge by appearances!”

“We may have no choice but to act by them, though, my lord!” said Andrew. “At the moment I should indeed be sorry to judge either of you by them. Eppie must come home with me, or she will find it the more displeasent — perhaps for both of you!”

“Oh, if you threaten us!” said his lordship contemptuously, “then of course we are very frightened; but you had better beware, for thereby you will only make it the more difficult — perhaps impossible, who can tell — for me to do your granddaughter the justice I have always intended.”

“What your lordship's notion o' justice may be, I will not trouble you to explain,” said the old man, “all I desire is, that, whatever may have passed between you, she will come with me.”

“Let us leave the matter to Mrs. Brooks,” said Forgue. “I shall soon satisfy her that there is no occasion for any hurry. Believe me, you will only bring trouble on the innocent!”

“Then it cannot be on you, my lord, for in this thing you have not behaved as a gentleman ought!” said the cobbler.

“You dare tell me so to my face!” cried Forgue, striding up to the little old man, as if he would sweep him away with the very wind of his approach.

“Yes, for I would say it behind your back,” replied the cobbler. “Didna your lordship promise there should be an end to this whole meeserable affair?”

“Not to you, anyhow!” replied his lordship.

“To me you did!” said Donal, who had hitherto only waited in silence.

“Do hold your tongue, Grant, and don’t make things worse. To you I can easily explain it. Besides, you have nothing to do with it now this honest man has taken it up. Believe me, a fellow may break his word to the ear, and yet keep it to the sense.”

“The only thing could make that true, would be that you had married, or were about to marry her!”

Eppie would here have spoken; but she only gave a little cry, for Forgue put his hand over her mouth.

“You hold your tongue,” he said; “you will only complicate matters!”

“My lord,” said Donal, “you say I have nothing to do now with this affair: I may not from my friend’s side, but I have from my own.”

“What do you mean?”

“That I am in this house a paid servant: and I cannot allow anything to go on in it of which I know the master would so much disapprove without acquainting him with it.”

“You have just acknowledged, Mr. Grant, that you are neither more nor less than a paid servant. You

do not seem to know your duty as such : I shall be happy to explain it to you. You have nothing whatever to do with what may be going on in the house ; you have but to do your part of the work. You can scarcely have forgotten that you are my brother's tutor, not mine ! To interfere with what I do, is nothing but a piece of damned impertinence ! ”

“The impertinence, however, I most certainly intend to be guilty of, and that without the delay of a moment more than is necessary to the getting audience of your father.”

“You will not, if I give you such explanation as will satisfy you that I have done the girl no harm, and that I mean honestly by her ? ” said Forgue in a somewhat conciliatory tone.

“In any case,” returned Donal, “you having once promised, and then broken your promise, I shall without fail tell your father all I know.”

“And ruin her, and perhaps me too, for life ? ”

“The truth will ruin only what it ought.”

Forgue sprang upon him and struck him a heavy blow between the eyes. He had been having lessons in boxing while in Edinburgh, and had now confidence in himself. It was a well-planted blow, and Donal altogether unprepared for it. He staggered back against the wall, and for a moment or two could not see, while all he knew was that there was something or other he had to attend to. He did not see that his lordship, excusing himself doubtless on the ground of necessity, and that there was a girl in the case, would have struck him again. But the old man saw it, and throwing himself between, received the blow. He fell at Donal's feet.

As Donal came to himself, he heard a groan from the ground. He looked down, saw Andrew, and understood.

“Dear old man!” he said, “did he dare strike you too?”

“He didn’t mean it,” returned Andrew feebly. “Are you getting over it, sir? He gave you a terrible one! You might have heard it across the street!”

“I shall be all right in a minute,” answered Donal, wiping the blood out of his eyes. “I’ve a good hard head, thank God. But what has become of them?”

“You didn’t think he was waiting to see us get better!” said the cobbler. “I wonder whether they have gone into the house!”

They were now on their feet, and looking at each other through the starlight, bewildered, and uncertain what step to take next. The cobbler was the first to recover his wits.

“It’s o’ no use,” he said, “to rouse the castel wi’ a hue an’ cry. What hae we to say but ’at we faund the twa i’ the garden thegither? It wad but raise ill rumors, the which, fause or fac’ wad do naething for naebody. His lordship maun be loot ken, as ye say: but will his lordship believe ye, sir? I’m some i’ the min’ the young man’s awa’ til’s faither’s a’ready, to prejudese him again onything ye may say.”

“That makes it the more necessary,” said Donal, “that I should go at once to his lordship. He will fall out upon me, I can see, for not having told him at once; but I must not mind that. If I were not to tell him now, he would indeed have a good case against me!”

They were already walking towards the house, the

old man giving a groan now and then. After what had happened, he said, he could not go in ; he would walk gently home, and perhaps Donal would overtake him.

It was an hour and a half before Andrew got home, for it turned out one of his ribs was broken, and Donal had not overtaken him. Having washed the blood from his face, Donal sought Simmons.

“His lordship can’t see you now, I am sure, sir,” answered the butler, “for Lord Forgue is with him.”

Donal turned away and went up the stairs to his lordship’s apartment. As he passed the door of his bedroom opening on the corridor, he heard voices in debate, and found no one in the sitting-room. It was no time for ceremony : he knocked at the door of the bedroom. The voices within were too loud : he knocked again, and received an angry summons to enter. He did so, closed the door behind him, and stood near it, in sight of his lordship, waiting what should follow.

Lord Morven was sitting up in bed, his face so pale and distorted that Donal could hardly recognize his likeness. The bed was a large four-post bed, with curtains drawn close to the posts, admitting as much air as its construction would allow. At the foot of it stood Lord Forgue, his handsome, shallow face flushed with anger, his right arm straight down by his side, and the hand of it clenched hard. He turned when Donal entered. A fiercer flush overspread his face, but almost immediately rage seemed to yield to contempt, for a look of determined insult changed it, and he turned away. Possibly even the appearance of Donal was a relief to being alone with his father.

“Mr. Grant,” stammered his lordship, speaking with pain, “you are well come!—Just in time to hear a father curse his son—for curse him I will if he does not presently change his tone.”

“A father’s curse shall not make me play a dishonorable part!” said Forgue, looking however anything but honorable, for the heart, not the brain, moulds the expression.

“Mr. Grant,” resumed the father, “I have found you a man of sense and refinement! If you had been tutor to this degenerate boy, this, the worst trouble of my life would never have come upon me!”

Forgue’s lip curled, but he did not speak, and his lordship went on.

“Here is this fellow come to tell me to my face that he intends the ruin and disgrace of the family by a low marriage!”

“It would not be the first time it was so disgraced!” said the son—“if fresh peasant-blood be a disgrace to it.”

“The hussey is not even a wholesome peasant-girl!” cried the father.—“Who do you think she is, Mr. Grant?”

“I do not require to guess, my lord,” replied Donal. “I came to you now to inform your lordship of what I had myself seen as connecting Lord Forgue with one of the household.”

“She must leave the house this instant!”

“Then I too leave it, my lord!” said Forgue.

“With what funds?—may I presume to ask? Have you been assuming a right to your pleasure with my purse as well?”

His lordship glanced anxiously towards his bureau.

The look of indignant scorn on Forgue's face was followed by what might have been the pain of remembered impotence. But instead of answering his father's taunt he turned his attack upon Donal.

"Your lordship certainly does not flatter me with confidence," he said: "but it is not the less my part to warn you against this man: it is months since first he knew of what was going on between us: he comes to tell you now because I was this evening compelled to chastise him for a rude interference."

In cooler blood Lord Forgue would not have shown such meanness; but rage unmasks and brings to the front the meanness that lurks.

"And it is no doubt to the necessity for forestalling his disclosure that I owe the present ingenuous confession!" said Lord Morven. "But explain, Mr. Grant."

"My lord," said Donal calmly, "I was some time ago made aware that something was going on between them, and was, I confess, more alarmed for the girl than for him — the more that she is the child of friends to whom I am much beholden. But on the promise of both that the thing should be at an end, I concluded it better not to trouble your lordship with the affair. I may have made a mistake in this, but I sought to do the best. When, however, this night I saw that I had been hoodwinked, and that things were going on as before, it became imperative on my position in your lordship's house that I should make you acquainted with the fact. It was on the statement of my intention of doing so at once, my Lord Forgue suddenly assaulted me, leaving me for the moment incapable of the necessary action. He had

asseverated that there was nothing dishonest between them, but, having deceived me once, how was I to trust him again?"

"How indeed! The young blackguard! You had the testimony of your own eyes!" said his lordship, casting a fierce glance at his son.

"Allow me to remark," said Forgue, "that I deceived no one. What I promised was that that affair should not go on; it did not; the thing from that moment assumed an altogether serious aspect. Witness my presence in your bedchamber, my lord, to tell you I have given my word to marry the girl." There was a grandiloquence in the tone of the speech that would have prejudiced any lover of simplicity against any hope of depth in the man—only better and older men than Forgue have imagined more or less of grandiloquence essential to dignity.

"I tell you, Forgue, if you marry her I will disown you."

Forgue smiled, an impertinent smile, and held his peace: the threat had for him no terror worth defending himself from.

"I shall be the better able," continued his lordship, "to provide suitably for Davie: he is something like a son! But hear me, Forgue: you are, or ought to be, well enough aware that, if I left you all I had, it would be but beggary for one handicapped with an ancient title. You may think my anger with you very amusing, but it comes solely of anxiety on your account. Nothing but a suitable marriage—and the most suitable of all lies at your very door—can save you from the life of a moneyless noble—the most pitiable on the face of the earth. Even could you

ignore your position, you have no profession, no trade even, in these, trade-loving days, to fall back upon. You may do as you please for me, but except you marry as I please, you will have nothing from me but the contempt of a title without one farthing to sustain it in commonest decency. You have threatened to leave the house if I send the jade out of it: tell me honestly — can you pay for your own railway ticket — to anywhere?”

Forgue was silent. But rage was growing more fierce within him. At length he spoke, and speaking compelled Donal to a measure of respect for him he had not been prepared to entertain, though all the time he could not help doubting, nor knew why, the genuineness of the ring of his utterance. For it was that of a man who would do the right because that alone was it becoming in him to do; not that of a man who loved righteousness and hated iniquity — still less that of one who loved a woman as she ought to be loved. The tone was that of one who believed himself conferring an honor.

“My lord,” he said, “I have given my word to the girl” — he never once uttered her name to his father in Donal’s hearing — “that I will marry her: would you have me disgrace the family by breaking my word?”

“Tut! tut! There are words and words! No one dreams of obligation in the rash promises of a lover — especially where his is an unworthy love! Still less are they binding where the man is not his own master. You are not your own master; you are under bonds to your family, under bonds to society, under bonds to your country. Marry this girl, and

you will find yourself an outcast ; marry as I would have you, and you will find no one think the worse of you for a foolish vow of your boyhood — should the mere rumor of such a thing ever reach the serene air of your high position.”

“ And let the girl go and break her heart ! ” said Forgue with a look black as death.

“ You need not fear ! There is no ground for imagining yourself such a marvel in the world of humanity that even a kitchen-wench will break her heart for you. She will, like any other woman, be very sorry for herself, no doubt ; but you may rest assured it will be nothing more than she expected, and will only confirm her opinion of you. She knows well enough the risk she runs.”

While they talked, Donal, waiting his turn, stood as on hot iron. To hear his lordship utter such things was, I need not say, as abominable in his ears as any other foul talk of hell. The moment his lordship ceased, he turned to Forgue, and said. .

“ My lord, you have removed my harder thoughts of you. You have broken your word in an infinitely nobler way than I believed you capable of ! ”

Lord Morven stared dumfounded.

“ Your comments are out of place, Mr. Grant,” said Forgue, with something of recovered dignity. “ The matter is between my father and myself. If you wanted to beg my pardon, you might have found a more fitting opportunity.”

Donal held his peace. He had felt bound to show his sympathy with his enemy wherein he was right. More than that was not at the moment called for.

The earl was perplexed. His one poor ally had

apparently gone over to the enemy! He took a glass with some colorless liquid in it from the table by his bedside, and drank its contents; then, after a moment's silence, as if of exhaustion and suffering, said to Donal,

“Mr. Grant, I desire a word with you.—Leave the room, Fergue.”

This last was said rudely.

“My lord,” returned Fergue, “I came to acquaint you with a resolve affecting both my honor and happiness, and you order me from the room to confer with one whose presence is an insult to me.”

“It seemed to me,” said his father bitterly, “he was of your own mind in the matter, as, no doubt, all of similar low — I mean humble origin — whatever their education, must in the nature of things be. But, so far, I have found Mr. Grant a man of honor, and I owe you no explanation of my desire to have some private conversation with him. I therefore request you will leave us alone together.”

All this was said so politely, so altogether differently from his former utterance, that the youth dared not refuse compliance.

The moment he was out of the room, and had closed the door behind him, the earl said,

“Just look through that little hole in the panel, Mr. Grant, and tell me whether the fire is burning in the next room.”

“It is blazing,” said Donal.

“Had there been a head between, you would not have seen it. I am glad he yielded, for otherwise I should have had to ask you to put him out, and I hate rows. I presume you would have been able?”

“ I think so,” answered Donal.

“ And you would have done it ? ”

“ I would have tried.”

“ Thank you. But you seemed a moment ago ready to take his part against me ! ”

“ On the girl’s part — yes ; — for his own sake too, as an honest man.”

“ Come now, Mr. Grant ; I understand your prejudices. You cannot look on the affair as you would had you been differently brought up. I am glad to have a man of such sound general principles to form the character of my younger son, but a moment’s reflection will satisfy you — the thing is as plain as a mountain — that what would be the duty of a young man in your rank of life towards a young woman in the same rank, would be — would be simple ruin to one in Lord Fergue’s position. For one thing, a capable man like yourself can make his living anyhow ; while to one born to bear the burden of a title, and without the means of supporting it, marriage with such a girl would mean ten times the sacrifice involved in the keeping of such a promise by one even in such a superior position as your own.”

“ I do not dispute a word of what you have *now* said, my lord,” answered Donal ; “ but my feeling is, at the moment a man speaks words of love to a woman, be she as lowly and as ignorant as mother Eve, that moment rank and privilege vanish from between them. All such distinction is swallowed by the closer bond. After that if a man, without sufficient reason, should fail to fulfil his part, he is a traitor.”

The earl gave a small sharp smile.

“You would make a good special pleader, Mr. Grant; but if you had known half as much of the world as I have, and had seen the consequences of such marriages half as often as I have seen them, you would modify your feeling at least if not your opinion. If I now take you into my confidence in a small matter belonging to the history of our family — but no; better not! mark this, however; *the marriage shall not take place* — by God! Do you imagine I could for one moment talk of it with such coolness were there the smallest actual danger of its occurrence — if I did not know that it could not, shall not take place! The boy is a fool, and I will let him know he is a fool. I have him in my power — neck and heels in my power, though he does not know it, and never could of himself arrive at the fact, were he to ponder over my assertion the rest of his life. One word from me, and the rascal is paralyzed. Will you do so much for me as tell him what I have just said? The marriage shall *not* take place, I repeat. Sick man as I am, I am not yet reduced to lying in bed, and receiving announcements of the good pleasure of my sons.”

He took up a small bottle, poured a little from it, added water, and drank it — then resumed.

“Now for the girl: who knows about the affair in the house?”

“So far as I am aware, no one knows of what has just come to light, except the old man, her grandfather, who had come to the castle to inquire after her, and was with me when we came upon them in the fruit garden. If Lord Fergue tell no one, no one is likely to hear of it.”

“Then let no further notice be taken of it. Tell

no one — not even Mrs. Brooks. Let the young fools do as they please.”

“I cannot consent to that, my lord.”

“Why, what the devil have you to do with it?”

“I am bound by my friendship with the old man” —

“Pooh! pooh! Don’t talk rubbish. What is it to any old man? Let them go their own way. I was foolish myself to take the matter so seriously. It will all come right. If no opposition be offered, the affair will soon settle itself. By Jove, I’m sorry you interfered. It would have been much better left alone.”

“My lord,” said Donal, “I can listen to nothing more in this strain.”

“Very well. All I ask is — give me your promise not to interfere?”

“I will not.”

“Thank you.”

“My lord, you mistake. I meant you to understand that I would give you no such pledge. What I can do, I do not now know; but if I can do anything to save that girl from disgrace, I will do it.”

“Disgrace! you seem to think nothing of the only disgrace worth the name — that of an ancient and noble family.”

“The honor of that family, my lord, will be best preserved in the person of the girl.”

“Damn you! Do you take me for your pupil? Do you think to preach to me?”

But notwithstanding his fierce words Donal could not help either seeing or imagining a cowering, almost a suppliant look in his lordship’s eye.

“You must do as I tell you in my house, or you

will soon see the outside of it.—Come, I will tell you what: marry the girl yourself—they say she is duced pretty—and I will give you—five hundred pounds for your wedding journey. Only take her out of this!—Poor Davie! I am sorry.”

“Is it your lordship’s wish I should give Lord Forgue your lordship’s message before I go?”

“Go? where?—Ah, on your wedding journey. Ha, ha!—No, it will hardly be necessary then.”

“I did not mean that, my lord.”

“Where then? To tell the damned cobbler to come and fetch the slut? I will see to that. Ring the bell there.”

“I am sorry to refuse anything your lordship desires of me, but I will not ring the bell.”

“You won’t?”

“No, my lord.”

“Then, damn you! be off to your lessons. I can do very well without you. Mind you don’t let the insolent face of you come across my path. You are good enough for Davie, but you won’t do for me.”

“If I remain in your house, my lord, it will be as much for Eppie’s as for Davie’s sake.”

“Get out of my sight,” was his lordship’s reply, and Donal went.

He had hardly closed the door behind him, when he heard the bell ring violently; and ere he reached the bottom of the stair, he met the butler panting up as fast as his short legs and red nose would permit him to answer it. He would have stopped to question Donal, but he hastened past him to his own room, and there sat down to think what he ought to do.

CHAPTER XVII.

KEEPING ALOOF.

HAD Donal Grant's own dignity in the eyes of others been with him a matter of importance, he would have left the castle the moment he had got his things together ; but he thought much more of Davie, and much more of poor Eppie. What was to be done for her? There was little good to be expected from such a marriage, but was it likely the marriage would ever take place? Was he at liberty to favor it any more than to oppose it. He was in the castle in the pay of the lord of the castle—not as the friend of the cobbler or his granddaughter! It would be treacherous to deliver the message first given him and then withdrawn, so warning the fellow to steal a march on his father and marry the girl ere he could interfere! At the same time he had told the earl that he would remain in the castle in order partly to do what he could for Eppie. To break off the affair in any way would be equally satisfactory to Lord Morven! First of all he must see Andrew Comin again—the rather that he was anxious about him after the rough treatment he had received, which he more than suspected he had met in seeking to defend his friend. He hastened therefore to the town.

But when he reached the bottom of the hill, there

at the gate was Forgue, walking up and down as if waiting for some one — it might be himself or it might be Eppie. He would have passed with a salutation, but Forgue stepped right in his way.

“Mr. Grant,” he said, “it is well we should understand each other.”

“I think, my lord, if you do not yet understand me, it can scarcely be my fault. I have taken some pains both active and passive to explain myself.”

“Come, come! No jesting! The time is not suitable. What did my father say?”

“I would deliver to your lordship a message which at one part of our interview he gave me for you, had I not two reasons against doing so — one that I believe he was not of the same mind at its close, and the other that I have made up my mind not to serve him or you in the matter so far even as to take a message between you.”

“Then you intend neither to meddle nor make?”

“That is my affair, my lord. I have not the intention of taking your lordship into my confidence.”

“Don't be unreasonable, now. Do get down off your high horse. Can't you understand a fellow? Everybody can't keep his temper as you do! Believe me I mean the girl no harm.”

“I will hold no further conversation with you. And I give you warning that whatever you insist on saying to me against my will, I will use against you without the least scruple, should occasion offer in the cause of Eppie or her friends.”

As he spoke he caught a look on Forgue's face, and perceived a change in his manner; and it struck him that it was not for him but for Eppie he had

been waiting. He turned at once and went back towards the castle. If she were on her way to join Forgue, he might meet her. Forgue called after him, but he did not heed him; as if he had forgot something, he hastened back up the hill, but not so much as rustle of mouse or bird did he hear as he went. He lingered about the top of the road for half an hour, but no one appeared. He turned and went back to the gate, but no one was there or near it. It was of no use applying to Mrs. Brooks; except she locked the girl up she could not keep her if she was set on going; neither was he at all desirous she should remain. If she could not be restored to the care of her grandparents, there was nothing else to be done! Again he set out to go to Andrew Comin, and hold with him and his wife a consultation.

He found the old woman in great distress: not merely was she sore troubled concerning the child — she was not so able as her husband to think philosophically about the sad affair — but she had his condition also to make her unhappy, for the poor man was suffering great pain, so much that the moment Donal saw him he went without a word to fetch medical aid. The doctor said there was a rib broken, got him to bed, bound him up, and sent him some medicine. All done that could be done, Donal sat down to watch beside him. He lay very still, with closed eyes and a white face. But so very patient was he that the very pain seemed to find utterance in a kind of blind smile. Donal did not know much about pain: he could read in that look the devotion of the man to the will of him whose being was his peace, but he did not know above what depths of suffering

his faith lifted him, and held him hovering as it were in safety. For that faith brought him into contact with the life itself. It is not the faith that is the saving power, but the eternal life in whose arms it enables us to lie.

Then in closest contact with the divine, the original relation restored, the source once more holding its issue, the divine love is pouring itself into the deepest vessel of the man's being, itself but a vessel for the holding of the diviner and divinest. If this be so, who can wonder if even in keenest pain a man should be able to smile? There are few who have reached that point of health that they can laugh at disease, but are there none? Let no man say that because he cannot, therefore no one can.

The old woman, too, was very calm, only every now and then she would lift her hands and shake her head—and look as if the universe were going to pieces, because her old man lay there broken by the hand of the ungodly. And, doubtless, if he had lain there forgotten, or the ill had befallen him because he was forgotten, then indeed the universe would have been going to pieces. When he coughed, and the pain was keenest, every pang seemed to go through her body to her heart. Love is as lovely in the old as in the young—lovelier when in them, as often, more sympathetic and unselfish, that is true.

Donal could not leave her to the labor of watching the night long. He wrote to Mrs. Brooks, telling her he would not be home that night, but would be back to breakfast in the morning; and, having found a messenger at the inn, made his arrangements to watch through the night.

It glided quietly over. Andrew slept a good deal, and seemed to be having pleasant visions. He was proving something of the yet unexplored meaning of the words, "ye shall be saved." Sometimes his lips would move as if he were holding talk with friendly soul. Once Donal heard the murmured words, "Lord, I'm a' yer ain;" and after that he noted his sleep grew deeper; nor did he wake till the day began to dawn, when he asked for something to drink. Seeing Donal, and perceiving that he had been by his bedside all the night, he thanked him with a smile and a little nod, which somehow served to bring to Donal's memory certain words Andrew had spoken on another occasion: "there's ane, an' there's a'; an' the a' 's ane, an' the ane's a'."

When Donal reached the castle, he found his breakfast waiting him, and Mrs. Brooks too waiting to help him to it, and let him know something that had taken place, which also concerned his friends. Eppie, she said, had the night before come in from the garden, and meeting her in the passage, had burst into tears; but she could get nothing out of her, and had sent her to her room. This morning she had not come down at the proper time, and when she sent after her did not come. Then she went up herself, and found her in a strange mood. She would explain nothing, only declared herself determined to leave the castle that very day, and she was now packing her things to go; nor did Mrs. Brooks see any good in trying to prevent her. Work was worthless when the heart was out of it!

Donal agreed with her, and said if only she would go home, there was plenty for her to do there, for her

grandfather was in bed with a broken rib, and very feverish ; old people's bones were brittle and not easy to mend ! There would be plenty to do before they got him round again !

Mrs. Brooks agreed it would be the best thing for her to go home, where she would be looked after by those who had a better right and a smaller house. The girl would never do at the castle, it was clear ! For her part she would not keep her now if she were to beg to stay ; it was evident some nonsense was yet sticking in her head that would breed her grief, and she would rather it did not arrive while she was under her charge ! Donal asked her if she could see that she went home. Mrs. Brooks said she would take her home herself, adding,

“ The lass is no an ill ane ; she's but hitey-titey, an disna ken what she wad be at. She wants some o' the Lord's ain discipleen, I'm thinkin' ! ”

“ An' that ye may be sure she'll get, Mistress Brooks,” said Donal.

Managed by the housekeeper, Eppie readily yielded, and was even readier to go home to help her grandmother nurse her grandfather than she had expected. For the poor girl expected the whole thing would presently be known, and was in terror of Lord Morven, whom everybody in the castle feared — except Mrs. Brooks and Donal — it would have been difficult to say precisely why, or what shape the fear took : I think it came in part of their seeing him so seldom ; he had come nearly to represent the ghost, said to issue from the invisible room and haunt the castle. It made it the easier for her to go home that her grandmother would be glad of her help, and that her

grandfather, of whom she was more afraid, would not be able to say much to her. With all her faults she was an affectionate girl, and was concerned to hear of the state of her grandfather — the more that, if she did not know, she must have suspected something of how he had met with his accident — a thing she would feel more than she would resent; for the love of being loved is such a poor inspiration, that the greatest injustice from the dearest to the next dearest will by some natures be easily tolerated. In ourselves, God help us! we are a mean set — and meanest the man who is ablest to justify himself!

Mrs. Brooks, having got ready a heavy basket of good things for Eppie to carry home to her grandmother, and I suspect having made it the heavier for the sake of punishing Eppie a little, set out presently to take her home, saying to herself,

“The jaud wants a when harder wark nor I ha’e ever hauded til her han’! *Her* to be settin’ up for company to the young lord! She’s but a cart-horse, an’ i’ the shafts she’s gang what I hae left o’ the cawin’ o’ her!”

But she was kindly received, and without a word of reproach, by her grandmother. The invalid smiled to her when she came near his bedside, and the poor girl turned away to conceal the tears she could not repress. She loved her grandparents, and she loved the young lord, and she could not get the two loves to dwell peaceably in her mind together — a common difficulty with our weak, easily divided, hardly united natures — frangible, friable, easily distorted, easily coming to pieces! It needs no less than God himself, not only to unite us to one another, but to join up

the ill-fitting, roughly broken portions of our individual natures. Tearfully but diligently Eppie set about the duties laid upon her — no worse than if she had belonged to the house all the time; and not only the heart, but the bones and sinews of her grandmother were relieved by her presence and diligence. She was very gloomy, and wept not a little, but was nevertheless diligent, and doubtless found some refuge from anxious thought in the service she rendered. What she saw as probable prospect for her future, I cannot say: but for the present she was parted from her lover, in whose faithfulness her utmost confidence one hour was dashed by huge uncertainty the next. The faith of feeling will always be a thing of moods, whether its object be God or man. But her grandmother rejoiced over her as out of harm's way.

CHAPTER XVIII.

IN THE SCALES.

UP at the castle things fell into their old routine. Nothing had been arranged between Lord Forgue and Eppie, and his lordship seemed content that things should be as they were. Mrs. Brooks let him know that Eppie had gone home; he made neither remark nor further inquiry, and indeed manifested no interest in the matter. It was well his father should not see it necessary to push things farther. He had told him his mind, and so relieved himself; but he did not want to turn out of the castle. Without means, what was he to do? He had pledged himself to nothing; but the marriage could not be to-day or to-morrow. And in the meantime, he could, while she was at home, see her perhaps even more easily than at the castle. He would contrive! As to the old fellow, he was sorry he had hurt him, but he could not help it; if he would get in the way, how could he? He had to get rid of the tutor! Things would have been much worse if he had not got first to his father! He would now wait a bit, and see what would turn up! For the tutor-fellow, he must not quarrel with him downright! No good would come of that! In the end he would have his way in spite of them all! But even what he wanted he did not know. He

only knew, or imagined, that he was over head and ears in love with the girl: what was to come of it was all in the clouds. He had said he meant to marry her, but to that he was, more than he knew himself, urged by the desire to escape the contempt of the tutor he scorned: he thought he had at least discomfited him. He had little doubt that if he did marry Eppie, or any one else of whom his father did not approve, he had nothing to look for from him but the freedom of absolute poverty; and as he did not know any way to make or to earn money, he was not prepared to defy him immediately whatever he might do by and by. He said to himself he was willing to work for his wife if he only knew how; but he had neither any predilection for a special profession, any gift in one art or in another, nor indeed always a clear vision, when he said so, of Eppie as the wife in prospect. And, alas, it would take years ere he would be able to earn even a woman's wages! It would be a fine thing, no doubt, for a lord to labor like a common man for the support of the child of the people whom he had made his wife, and for whose sake he had sacrificed everything, but where was the dawn of a possibility of doing so? It is hardly to be wondered at that such a one as Fergue should, when thoughts like these grew too many for him, wish he had never seen the girl. His heart would doubtless immediately reproach him, but he would thereupon at once comfort his conscience by saying to it that to wish he had never seen her was a very different thing from wishing to undo what was. In the meantime he loafed about as much as he dared, haunting the house where she was, in the

hope of falling in with her, but not once presuming to enter it even in the dark; but for many days Eppie never went out of doors except into the garden at the back, and he never even saw her.

Though she had never spoken of it to any one, Arctura had more than a suspicion that something was going on between her cousin and the pretty maid; and after Eppie had left the house, more than one — Davie amongst them, though he did not associate the two things — observed that she was more cheerful than before. But there was no increase of intercourse between her and Forgeue. Both of them knew it was the wish of the head of the house that they should marry, but the earl had been wise enough to say nothing openly to either of them, for he knew the thing would have a better chance on its own inherent merits of youth and good looks and advantages on both sides. As yet, however, they had shown no sign of drawing to each other. It might, perhaps, have been different had not the young lord been taken with the pretty housemaid, with whom at first he had thought of nothing more than a little passing flirtation, conscious of the height in which he must stand in her regard from the height in which he stood in his own. But it was from no jealousy that Arctura was relieved by the departure of Eppie. She had never seen anything very attractive in her cousin. Her religious impressions would indeed have served of themselves to protect her from any drawing towards Forgeue: they had prevailed to prejudice her against common house-friendliness towards a very different man! The sense of relief she had was the deliverance from the impression, conviction almost,

that something clandestine was going on, while she could not interfere with it even so far as to confess knowledge of it. Her modesty was rendered uneasy; she felt shy and uncomfortable — hardly daring to be natural for dread of showing the slightest resemblance to behavior of which she had been so far witness as to be compelled to suspect more than she had seen. Once or twice she had been on the point of saying to Mrs. Brooks that she thought her cousin and Eppie were oddly familiar, but had failed to say it. The little window of her sitting-room partially overlooked a certain retired spot favored of the lovers in ignorance that it was so overlooked; but she was disabled from regarding even what she might have seen by maidenly shame and trepidation. It was indeed no wonder that she felt relieved, and more able to behave naturally on the departure of Eppie.

About this time her friend, Miss Carmichael, returned from a rather lengthened visit. But now, after the kind of atonement that had taken place between her and Donal, it was with some anxiety she looked forward to seeing her. She shrank from telling how she had been attracted to him by the wonderful poem, as she thought it, which he had written for Kate Graeme, and then compelled to be quite grateful to him for the kind way he had received and entertained her rude doubts. She shrank also from showing her the verses, for she did not think they were of a kind to meet with any recognition from her. She felt certain indeed that she would make game of them, and that not good-humoredly as Kate had done, who confessed to

seeing some beauty in them. For herself the poem, and the study of its growth, had ministered so much nourishment to certain healthy poetic seeds lying hard and dry in her bosom, that they had begun to sprout, and then to shoot rapidly up. Hence Donal's poem was not only something henceforward sacred to her, but it had made her aware of something very defective in her friend's constitution: she had not yet inquired whether in her constitution mental, moral, or spiritual—the probability being it was in all three. Doubtless, thought Arctura, she knew most things better than she, and certainly had a great deal more common sense than she; for was she not always telling her that she troubled herself with fancies, and refused to take things as they were! On the other hand, was she not satisfied with far less than she could satisfy herself with? To believe as her friend believed would hardly save her from the insanity that sometimes threatened her. Surely she must be made on a smaller scale of necessities than herself, whatever that might indicate! How was she able to love the God she said she believed in. For herself, she would have a God to love as beautiful at least as she could imagine a God! But Miss Carmichael would say her poor earthly imagination was not at liberty to occupy itself with such a high and awful subject. Oh, why should not God tell her something about himself—something direct—straight from himself? Why should she only hear about him at second hand—always and always? Alas, poor girl! second hand? Five hundredth hand rather! and you might have been going all the time, and only those who

taught you known or cared enough about the grandest fact of all, to the very God himself manifest in his own shape, which is ours also! Then must you soon have learned that your imagination could never grasp, even when presented to it, could never receive into it the unspeakable excess of his loveliness, of his absolute devotion and tenderness to the creatures his father had made! In the absence of Miss Carmichael she had been daring to think with less oppression of many things that in her presence had seemed ghastly hopeless; now in the prospect of her reappearance she began to feel as if she had been wicked in ever daring to have a thought of her own concerning the God that was nearer to her than her own thoughts, that was not put into her by another. She might well dread her, she had gained such an unhealthy mastery over her! How should she answer her were they to meet Donal, and was she to see her smile to him as she now always did! One thing she was determined upon — and herein lay the pledge of her coming freedom — that she would not for her presence behave to him in the least otherwise than was her wont. She saw that if she would be in the least worthy she must be straightforward. Were she not, she must not only lose the respect of Donal in addition to her own, but he must thenceforward only the more despise those doctrines which she began now to feel herself to blame for not having one way or another brought to bear upon him, in some endeavor to make up to him for their having been so much neglected in his youthful training.

Donal and she had never had any further talk, much as she would have liked it, upon things poetic. As a matter of supposed duty — where she had got the idea, I do not know — certainly not from Miss Carmichael, seeing she approved of none but Cowper, Pollock, and James Montgomery — she had been reading the *Paradise Lost*, and would have liked much to talk to Donal about the poem, but had not the courage — partly because she had, as I have said, seen something of Forgue's goings on with Eppie.

Of course, when her friend came to see her, she at once perceived a difference in her manner which set her thinking. Miss Carmichael was not one to do or say anything without thinking about it first. She had a thorough confidence in her own judgment, and liked to exercise it, therefore almost always rejected a first impulse. Judgment was on the throne; feeling only on the footstool. There was something in Arctura's carriage which reminded her of almost the only time when she had seemed to stand upon her rank with her: it was when she had made a remark disparaging to a favorite dog, for the animals Arctura could be brave even in the face of the friend who had sat on her like a spiritual nightmare, which was only just beginning to become frightful to her; they were not under the wrath and curse in the same way that men and women were, guilty as born of their own fathers and mothers, therefore might be defended. Arctura had on that occasion shown so much heat that Miss Carmichael, who had, however, very little of the toady in her, saw that, if she was to keep her influ-

ence over the weak-minded girl, as she counted her — all for her good of course! — she must take care to steer clear of any insignificant prejudices that might show themselves, else human offence would rouse the phantom of rank against plebeian interference. So now she was the more careful — said nothing, or next to nothing, but watched her keenly, and not the less slyly that she looked her so straight in the face every time she spoke to her. There is an effort to see into the souls of others that is essentially treacherous, and may be present without the least accompanying consciousness that it is such as it is: wherever inquiry outruns regard, where friendship is the ostensible bond, it is treacherous; it is at least an endeavor to lay hold of more than the friend chooses to give.

They went for a little walk in the grounds; and so it was ordered that they met, on their return, Donal setting out on an excursion with Davie. Arctura and Donal passed with a bow and a friendly smile; Davie stopped and spoke to them, then bounded after his friend.

“Have you been attending Davie’s scripture lesson regularly?” asked Miss Carmichael.

“No; I have only been once since you left,” replied Arctura, glad, she could not quite have told why, to be able to give the negative answer.

“What, my dear! have you been leaving your lamb to the will of the wolf?”

“I begin to doubt if he is a wolf.”

“Ah! so well draped in his sheepskin? I am afraid he thinks to devour sheep and shepherd too!” said Miss Carmichael, with a searching glance

at her friend—a glance intended to look what it was.

“Don’t you think,” suggested Lady Arctura, “when you are not able to say anything, it is better not to be present? Then your silence cannot look like agreement.”

“But you could always protest, simply by saying it was all wrong, and you did not agree with him.”

“But what if you were not sure that you did not agree with him?”

“I thought as much,” said Miss Carmichael to herself. “I foresaw this.—But,” and here she spoke aloud, “if you are not sure you agree, then you can say: I can’t say I agree with you. It is always safer to admit too little than too much.”

“But I want a great deal more than I can get to save me. I have never yet heard what seems enough to save me.”

“That is to say God has not done his part.”

“No; it is only to say that I hope he has done more than I have yet heard.”

“More than send his son to die for your sins?”

“More than you say that means.”

“The way is plain: you have but to believe that Christ did so.”

“But I don’t know whether he died for my sins.”

“He died for the sins of the whole world.”

“Then I must be saved?”

“Yes, when you believe it.”

“Then I cannot be saved except I believe that I shall be saved. And I cannot believe I shall be saved until I know I shall be saved. And I shall not be saved until I believe it!”

“That is cavilling, Arctura! Is that the kind of argument you have been hearing from Mr. Grant? I see I ought not to have gone away!”

“I am sorry if I have said anything I ought not; but really I cannot get a hold of anything; and sometimes I feel as if I should go out of my mind.”

“So you have told me more than once, but I had hoped you would apply the true antidote to such temptations. I have done my best for you, but if you think you have found a better teacher, I fear it will no longer be of any use to warn you.”

“If I did believe I had found a better teacher, it would not; but I am only afraid I have not. I am sure the things he teaches me are much more desirable than”—

“To the unsanctified heart, no doubt.”

“Is it the unsanctified heart,” said Arctura, astonished at her own boldness, and the sense of power and freedom growing in her as she spoke, “that desires to find God so beautiful and good that it can worship him with its whole power of love and adoration? Or is God less beautiful and good than that?”

“We ought to worship God whatever he is.”

“But could we love him with all our hearts if he were not altogether loveable?”

“He might not be the less to be worshipped though he seemed to our poor ignorance not so. We must worship his justice; being all powerful he can do nothing wrong.”

To this Arctura returned no answer; it fell on her heart like an iceberg. She was not, however,

so utterly overwhelmed by it as she would have been some time before; she thought with herself, "I will ask Mr. Grant. I am sure *he* does not think like that! Why, if power made things right—I begin to think she does not understand what she is talking about! Suppose I were to make a creature needing all my love and tenderness to make life endurable to him and then not be so kind to him as he needed, would not that be cruel in me? Would I not be to blame? Can God be God and do anything conceivably to blame—anything that is not altogether beautiful? But she will tell me we cannot judge of what it would be right for God to do by what it would be right for us to do. Then if what seems right to me is not right to God, I must wrong my conscience and be a sinner in order to serve him! Then my conscience is not the voice of God in me! How then am I made in his image? What does that mean? Ah, but that image has been defaced by the fall! Then I cannot tell a bit what God is like! And I can never love him! Oh, me, I am very miserable! I am no child of his."

Thus, long after Miss Carmichael had taken a coldly sorrowful farewell of her, she went round and round the old millhorse track of her self-questioning: in nothing was God to be trusted until she had done something she could not do, upon which he would take her into favor, and then she could trust him. What a God to think of giving all her heart to, to think of ever being at home with! Then she would compare Miss Carmichael and Donal Grant, and think with herself whether Donal

was not as likely to be right as she. Only, for assurance, for certainty — where was that — in regard to these questions, or indeed anything at all? How was she ever to know anything for certain? And what if the thing she came to know for certain should be — a God she could not love?

The next day was Sunday. Davie and his tutor came up with her going home from church. It came as of itself to her lips, and she said :

“Mr. Grant, how are we to know what God is like?”

“‘Philip saith unto him, Lord, show us the Father and it sufficeth us. Jesus saith unto him, Have I been so long time with you, and yet hast thou not known me, Philip? He that hath seen me hath seen the father, and how sayest thou then, Show us the father.’”

Thus answered Donal, without a word of his own, and though the three walked side by side together, it was a full ten minutes before another was spoken. Then at last said Arctura :

“If I could but see Christ to ask him!”

“It is not necessary to see him to ask him. Neither is it necessary to see him to know what he is like. You can read what those who loved him said he was like; and when you think you understand him as he showed himself — then there is your God.”

From that day Arctura's search took a new departure. It is strange how often one may hear a thing, yet never have really heard it! The heart can hear only what it is capable of hearing; therefore “the times of this ignorance God winked at;”

but alas for him who will not hear what he is capable of hearing!

His failure to get word or even sight of Eppie, together with some uneasiness possibly at the condition in which the grandfather continued, combined to make Lord Forgue accept the invitation — which his father had taken pains to have sent him — to spend three weeks or a month with a distant relative in the north of England: he would rather be out of the way till, however, the thing might turn, it should blow over. He would gladly have sent a message to Eppie, but not any one he could trust with it: Davie was too much under the influence of his tutor! So he went away without a word, and Eppie soon began to imagine he had deserted her for ever. For a time her tears flowed yet more freely, but she soon began to feel something of relief in having the question decided, for she could not herself see how they were ever to be married. She would have been content to love him always, she said to herself, were there no prospect of marriage or even were there no marriage in question; but would he remain true to her? She did not think she could expect it; so with many tears she thought she gave him up. He had loved her, and that was a grand thing!

There was much that was good, and something that was wise in the girl, notwithstanding her folly in allowing such a lover to become intimate with her. The temptation was great; even if his attentions were but meant to be transient, they were sweet while they passed. I doubt if her love was of the deepest she had to give; but who can tell?

A woman will love where a man can see nothing lovely. So long as she is able still to love, she is never perhaps quite to be pitied, but when the reaction comes!— Eppie attended to her duties, took her full share in all that had to be done, and reaped much commendation, which hardly served to make her happy, from her grandmother, willing to read in her the best. And so the dull days went by for Eppie.

But for Lady Arctura a great hope had begun to dawn — the hope, namely, that perhaps the world was in the hand, yea in the heart of One whom she herself might see in her inmost soul with clearest eyes to be Love itself—not a love she could not care for, but the very heart, generating centre, embracing circumference, and crown of all loves.

CHAPTER XIX.

STRANGE SIGHTS.

ONE stormy night in the month of March, when a bitter east wind was blowing, Donal seated at the plain deal-table which he had got Mrs. Brooks to find for him in the house, that he might use it as he pleased regardless of the overflow of ink, or other possible injury, was drawing upon it a diagram, in the hope of finding a simplification of some geometrical difficulty for Davie, when a sudden sense of cold made him cast a glance at his fire. He had been aware that it was sinking, but delaying because there was no fuel in the room, had, in the absorption of his work, forgotten it. It was now very low, and he must go at once upon the roof to fetch from his store both wood and coal. In certain directions of the wind this was a rather ticklish task; but he had taken the precaution of putting up here and there a handful of rope. He closed the door behind him to keep in what warmth he might, and ascending the stairs to another door a few feet higher, stepped out on the flat that ran along the thickness of the wall, with the roof on one side and a small parapet on the other, he stood for a moment to look around him. It was a moonlit night, so far as the clouds, blown in huge and almost continuous masses over the heavens, would permit the light of the moon to issue. The

roaring of the sea came like a low rolling mist across the flats. The air gloomed and darkened and lightened again around him as the folds of the cloud-blanket overhead were torn or dropped trailing or gathered again in the arms of the hurrying wind. As he stood, the wind seemed suddenly to change and take a touch of south in its blowing. The same instant came to his ear a loud wail of the ghost-music haunting the house. There was in it the cry of a discord, mingling with a wild rolling change of harmonies. He stood "like one forbid," and listened with all his power. It came again and again, and more continuously than he had ever heard it before. Now there was indeed some chance of following the sound, he thought — hunting it with the ear! As a gaze-hound with his eyes, and a sleuth-hound with his nose, he stood ready to start hunting with his listening listening ear. And now he came almost to the conclusion that the seeming approach and recession of the sounds was occasioned only by changes in their strength, not by any alteration of the position of their source. Had Donal ever in his life heard an Æolian harp, he would have thought of it now.

"Surely it must be something on the roof!" he said, and throwing down the pail he had brought for his fuel, and forgetting the dying fire in his room, he got down on his hands and knees, first to escape the wind in his ears, and next to diminish its hold on his person, he crept away over roof after roof like a cat. stopping every moment a new gush of the sound came, to determine what direction it was from, and then starting once more in the chase of it. Upon a great gathering of roofs like those of the castle,

erected at various times on various levels, and with all kinds of architectural accommodations of one part to another, sound would be constantly deflected, and there would be as many difficulties in tracing a sound as inside the house. But he persevered, aware of neither cold nor danger, as he crept now up, now down, now over flat leads, now over sloping slates or great roofing-stones, now along low parapets, and now round ticklish corners, following the sound ever, as a cat might a flitting unconscious bird. When the sound ceased, he would keep slowly on — his best movement was but slow — in the direction he had last chosen. Sometimes, when the moon was more profoundly obscured he had to stop altogether where he was, unable to get a peep at his course beyond. At one such moment, when it became all but quite dark, and the sound had not come for a time, he had to stop in a half-crouching position upon a high-pitched roof of great slabs, his fingers clutched around edges of the stones, and his mountaineering habits standing him in good stead, but protected a little from the full force of the blast by a huge stack of chimneys that rose to windward of him. While he clung thus and waited, once more, louder than he had yet heard it, almost, it seemed in his very ear, arose the musical ghost-cry — the cry this time almost as of a soul in torture. The moon came out as at the call to see, but there was nothing for Donal to see — nothing to suggest a possible origin of the sound. As if disappointed the moon instantly withdrew, the darkness again fell, and the wind rushed upon him stronger than ever. With that came the keen slanting rain, attacking him as with fierce intent of protecting the

secret, and plainly there was little chance of success that night. He must put off the hunt till daylight. If there was any material factor in the sound, he must be better able to discover it in the daylight. By the great chimney stack he could identify the spot where he had been nearest to it. There remained for the present but the task, perhaps a difficult one, of finding his way back to his tower.

And difficult it was — considerably more difficult than he had anticipated. He had not an idea in which direction his tower lay — had not even an idea left of the track, if track it could be called, by which he had come. One thing only was clear — it was somewhere else than where he was. He left the place, therefore, and, like any other honest pilgrim who knows he must go somewhere else, began his wanderings. But on his backward way he seemed to be far more obstructed than on his way thither. Again and again he could get no farther in the direction he was trying; again and again he had to turn and try another way. It was half-an-hour at least before he came to a spot which he knew. But by this time, with the rain the wind had fallen, and he was in less difficulty. He caught at length the outline of one of the sheds in which lay his stores, and from that his way was plain. He caught up his pail, filled it hurriedly with coal and wood, and hastened to his nest as fast as rather stiffened joints would carry him, though with little hope indeed of finding his fire still in life and capable of recovery.

But when he stepped from the roof on to the stair, and had gone down a few steps, a strange sight indeed was there waiting him. Below him on the stair, just

outside his door, with a small dim wax-taper in its hand, stood the form of a woman. Plainly from the position of her hand and her head she had just knocked, and was harkening for an answer. So intent was she and so loud still was the wind among the roofs, that she did not hear Donal's step above her. For the first moment he was afraid to speak, lest he should startle her — whoever it was, with a voice from an unexpected quarter ; but presently the figure knocked again, and then he felt he must speak : his voice would startle less than his approach from behind her. He made, however, a pardonable attempt at ventriloquy, saying with a voice intended to sound farther away than it was, "Come in." The hand sought a handle, searched and found the latch, and opened the door. As she did so, the light fell on her face, and Donal saw it was Lady Arctura. Then he spoke.

"I will be with you immediately, my lady," he said, and, descending, entered the room after her — a pleasant object to behold after his crawling excursion in wind and rain on the roof.

She started a little at hearing the voice behind her and turning gazed on him with a slight shadow of dismay.

Donal was more like a sweep returning from his work than a tutor in a lord's castle, and he bore in his hand a pailful of coals. Catching at once the meaning of her look, he made haste to explain, though in truth he had more cause to be surprised at her presence than she at his appearance.

"I have been out on the roof for the last hour and a half," he said.

“What were you doing there, if I may ask?” she said, with a strange mingling of expressions on her countenance, “and in such a night?”

“I heard the music, my lady — the ghost-music, you know, that they say haunts the castle, and” —

“I heard it too,” she said, almost under her breath, and with a look almost of terror. “I have often heard it before, but I think never so loud as to-night. Have you any idea about it, Mr. Grant?”

“None whatever, except that I am now nearly sure the source of it is somewhere about the roof.”

“I should be very glad if you could clear up the mystery.”

“I have some hope of doing so. But you are not frightened, my lady?” he asked, seeing her catch hold of the back of a chair, as if ready to sink. “Do sit down,” he continued, placing a seat for her; “I will get you some water.”

“No, no; I shall be all right in a moment,” she answered. “Your stair has taken my breath away, and then my uncle is in such a strange condition! That is why I came to you.”

“You need hardly be much disturbed by that; for you must have often seen him so before.”

“Yes — but never as to-night.”

“I have already seen him more than once in the strangest condition for a man in his senses!”

“But is he in his senses?”

“At times not, I suppose.”

“Would you come with me?”

“Anywhere.”

“Come then,” she said, and leaving the room, led the way by the light of her little taper, down the stair.

About half-way, she stopped at a door, and turning said, with a smile like that of a child — and perhaps the first untroubled look Donal had yet seen upon her face — “How delightful it is to be free from fear! I am not the least afraid now you are with me!”

“That makes me very glad,” said Donal. “I should like to kill fear — only by killing Wrong though: fear is but the shadow that always follows at the heels of Wrong. By the way, do you think the music has anything to do with your uncle’s condition?”

“I do not know; I have sometimes thought it had. But it is difficult to be sure about anything.”

She turned again hastily, and entering a part of the castle with which Donal had no acquaintance, led him, after many bewildering turns, on to the great staircase, down which she continued her course. Donal began to wonder what time of the night it could be, the house was all so still; nobody seemed awake in it. But there were, as I have said, comparatively so few servants for the size of it, that the same might have been at any hour almost. She went very fast and lightly down the stair, and for a moment Donal almost lost sight of her in the great curve. Presently, however, he overtook her, and, laying his hand on her arm, said in a half whisper,

“Pardon me, my lady, but tell me first what you want me to do that I may be prepared.”

“Nothing, nothing. Only come and see. He will not see you.”

Without another word Donal again followed her. She led him to the room on the stair, where first he had seen the earl. There was no light in it. Across the near end of it she led him, as he had himself gone

once before, through a door, round the edge of its back wall under the ascending spiral of the stair, and into the little chamber behind, which seemed a cut off and forgotten corner. As he entered it, he heard for one moment the murmuring of a voice, he thought, but immediately it was gone and the deepest silence filled the world. One step within the door Arctura stood still, turned her head towards Donal, and held high the taper. But she looked only at Donal, and not in the direction she wanted him to look. The feeble light fell on the form of the earl. A small box stood against the foot of the wall opposite the door; on the box, in a long dressing gown of rich faded stuff, the silk and gold in which shone in the dim light, stood the tall meagre form, with its back to the door, its face to the wall, close to it, immovable, and its arms and hands stretched out on the wall, like one on the cross. He stood without shifting or moving a muscle or uttering a sound. What could it mean? Donal gazed in a blank dismay. Not a minute passed, but he thought it a long and painful time, when the murmuring came again. Donal listened as to a voice from another world — a thing terrible to those whose fear dwells in another world. But this to Donal was terrible as no voice from the world of the departed could have been; this was a voice from a world of sin and suffering — a world the negation of the eternal, a world of darkness and the shadow of death. Yet surely there was some hope even in the form in which the indwelling despair made itself audible! The words were these: Donal could not help afterwards doubting whether he had indeed heard them:

“And we indeed justly; for we receive the due reward of our deeds; but this man hath done nothing amiss!”

Silence again fell, but the form did not move, and still the two stood regarding him.

From far away came the sound of the ghost-music. The head against the wall began to move as if waking from sleep. The hands sank along the wall, and fell by his sides. The earl gave a deep sigh, and stood leaning his forehead against the wall. Donal touched Lady Arctura and said with his eyes,

“Had we not better go? He will presently look round.”

She signified assent, and they turned softly and left the room, Lady Arctura still leading.

She went straight on to the library. Its dark oak cases and old bindings were hardly able to reflect a ray of the poor taper she carried, but the fire was not yet quite out. She set down the light, turned towards Donal, and looked at him in silence.

“What does it all mean?” he said in a hoarse whisper.

“God knows,” she returned solemnly, but with less emotion than Donal would have expected.

“Are we safe?” he asked. “How can you tell he will not come here?”

“I do not think he will. I have seen him in many parts of the house, but never here.”

As she spoke the door swung noiselessly open, and the earl entered. His face was ghastly pale; his eyes were wide open, and he came straight towards them. But he did not see them; or if he did, he saw them but as phantoms of the dream in which he was walk-

ing — phantoms which had not yet become active in his imagination. He drew a chair to the embers of the fire, to his fancy, I believe, a great and comfortable blaze, sat for a moment or two looking into them, then rose, and going to a distant part of the room took down a book from a shelf, returned with it to the fire, drew towards him Arctura's tiny taper, opened the book, and began to read in an audible murmur. And this is as near as Donal, trying afterwards to recall and set it down, could come to what he said :

In the heart of the dank earth-cave
Lay the king,
In the marble dome of the church so brave
The huge bells ring.
Said the worm at his side,
King-fool,
Turn to thy bride,
For the night is cool.
Wouldst thou lie like a stone till the nightless morn
Out of the dark be born?
The king through the night enorm
Heard the voice of the worm,
Like the sound of a muttered thunder low
In the realms where no feet go.
And he said, I will rise,
And will myself glad;
I will open my eyes,
And no more be sad.
For who is a god
But him who can spring
Up from the sod,
And be his own king?
I will fashion my gladness,
Dig my own despair,
And for good or badness —

Oh ! folly's own care !—
While I am content,
The world shall spin round
Till its force be outspent,
And it drop
Like a top —
A top spun by a boy,
Into the old profound —
While I sit in my tent,
Sit without sound ;
Still toss up my world,
See it burst and be drowned
In the blackness uncurled
From the deep hell-ground.
The dreams of a god are the worlds of his slaves !
I will be my own god,
And rule my own knaves.

The reading went on and on in this way for minutes, then the rhymes became less perfect, and then it sank into measured prose. All the time the tone of the speaker showed plainly enough he took the stuff for genuine poetry. Nay, more ; somehow he seemed to take it as presenting an essential verity of the form and material at least of his consciousness. One would have thought that the worm might again have a word to say to the buried dreamer ; but no : the worm had vanished, and the dreamer had made himself a god—his own god ! Donal ventured after a while to steal softly near, and peep over his shoulder at the book : it was the *Novum Organum*.

With a mutual glance the two stole out of the room, and left the dreamer to his dreams.

“Do you think,” said Donal, “I ought to tell Simmons ? He must know more about his master than any one else ?”

“It would be better. You know where to find him?”

“I do not.”

“I will show you a bell that rings in his room. He will think his lordship has rung it, and will look for him till he finds him.”

They went and rung the bell, and soon heard the steps of the faithful servant seeking his master. Then they bade each other good-night, and parted.

CHAPTER XX.

A VISITOR.

IN the morning Donal heard from Simmons that the earl was very ill indeed — could not raise his head.

“The way he do moan and cry,” said Simmons, “you would think either sure he was out of his mind, or had something heavy upon it! But all the years I have known him, every now and then he has been like that, then back to his old self again, little the worse for it.”

Towards the close of morning school, just as Donal was beginning to give Davie his lesson in religion, as Davie called it, Lady Arcturā entered the school-room, and sat down beside Davie; and Donal, in what he said to Davie, had therefore a special regard to the lady.

“What would you think of me, Davie,” he asked, “if I were very angry with you because you did not know something I had never taught you?”

Davie only laughed. It was to him a grotesque, an impossible supposition.

“Suppose,” Donal resumed, “I were to show you a proposition in Euclid, which you had never seen before, and were to say to you, ‘Now, Davie, this is one of the most beautiful of all Euclid’s propositions, and I desire you will immediately admire it in itself,

and admire Euclid for putting it so beautifully and clearly before us ;' what could you think of that?"

Davie thought and looked puzzled.

"You wouldn't do that, sir! I know you wouldn't," he said after a moment.

"Why should I not?"

"It isn't your way, sir."

"But suppose I were to take that way?"

"I should think you were not like yourself, sir."

"Tell me then why you would think me not like myself. Think."

"Because you would not be reasonable."

"What would you say to me?"

"I should say, 'Please, sir, let me learn the proposition first, and then I shall be able to admire it.' I don't know it yet."

"Very good. Now again, suppose, when you tried to learn it you were not able to do so, and therefore could see no beauty in it, would I not blame you?"

"No, sir; I am sure you would not — because I should not be to blame, and it would not be fair; and you never do what is not fair!"

"I am glad you think so. I try to be fair. That looks as if you believed in me, Davie?"

"Of course I do, sir!"

"Why?"

"Just because you are fair."

"But I might blame you, Davie, if you did not understand the proposition."

"Yes, if I did not try hard to learn it."

"Suppose, Davie, I said to you, 'Here is a very beautiful thing I should like you to learn,' and you said to me, 'I don't think it is very beautiful.'"

“It would be very rude. But you know I could not do that!”

“Why not?”

“Because I believe in you.”

“Suppose, then, you had begun and partly learned it, and one day you said to me, ‘I don’t see anything beautiful in this. I am afraid I never shall!’ Would that be to believe in me?”

“No, surely, sir, for you know best what I am able to do.”

“Suppose you were to say, ‘I daresay it is all as good as you say, but I don’t care to take so much trouble about it;’ what would that be?”

“A want of faith in you, sir. You would not want me to learn a thing that was not worth my trouble, or a thing I should not be glad of knowing when I did know it.”

“Suppose you were to say to me, ‘Sir, I don’t doubt what you tell me about this or that, but I am so tired of the whole thing I don’t mean to do anything more you tell me’ — could you then be said to believe in me?”

“No; not fairly. I might just believe your word, but it would not be to trust you. It would be to think my thinks better than your thinks, and that would be to put no faith at all in you.”

Davie had at times a curiously childish way of saying things.

“Suppose you were to say nothing, but go away and do nothing of what I told you to do — what would that be?”

“It would be worse and worse, for it would be sneaking.”

“One question more : what is faith — the big faith I mean — not the little faith that thinks you speak the truth — the big faith that we put in one above us?”

“To go at once and do the thing he tells us.”

“If you don't, then you haven't faith in him?”

“No ; certainly not.”

“But might not that be his fault?”

“Yes — if he was not good ; if I could not trust him ; if he said I was to do one kind of thing, and did another himself, then of course I could not have faith in him.”

“And yet you might feel you must do what he told you.”

“Yes ; but not from faith in him.”

“Would you always do what he told you?”

“No, not if he told me what it would be wrong to do.”

“Now tell me, Davie, what is the biggest faith of all — the faith to put in the one only thoroughly good person.”

“You mean God, Mr. Grant?”

“Whom else could I mean?”

“You might mean Jesus.”

“They are all one there ; for they mean always the same thing, do always the same thing, always agree. There is only one thing the one does that the other never does : they do not love the same person.”

“What *do* you mean, Mr. Grant?” interrupted Arctura : she had been listening intently, and now first imagined the cloven foot of Mr. Grant's heresy about to appear.

“I mean this,” said Donal, with a smile that seemed to Arctura such a light as she had never seen on human face, for it arose from no fount of mere human gladness, but from the more human gladness that is only to be found in God: “I mean that God loves Jesus, not God; and Jesus loves God, not Jesus. We love one another, not ourselves — don’t we, Davie?”

“You do, Mr. Grant,” answered Davie modestly.

“Now tell me, Davie, what is the great big faith of all that we have to put in the Father of us, who is as good not only as thought can think, but as good as heart can wish — infinitely better than anybody but Jesus Christ can think — what is the faith to put in him?”

“Oh, it is everything!” answered Davie.

“But what first?” asked Donal.

“First it is to do what he tells us.”

“Yes, Davie; it is to learn his problems by going and doing them, not trying to understand them first, or doing anything else whatever with them first than obeying them. We spread out our arms to him as a child does to his mother when he wants her to take him; then when he sets us down, saying, ‘Go and do this or that,’ we make all the haste in us to go and do it. And if ever we get hungry to see God, we must look at his picture.”

“Where is that, sir?”

“Ah, Davie, Davie! don’t you know that besides being himself, and just because he is himself, Jesus is the living picture of God?”

“I know, sir! We have to go and read about him in the book.”

“But may I ask you a question, Mr. Grant?” said Arctura.

“With all my heart,” answered Donal. “I only hope I may be able to answer it.”

“When we read about Jesus we have to draw for ourselves the likeness of Jesus from words, and you know what kind of a likeness the best artist would make that way, who had never seen with his own eyes the person whose portrait he had to paint!”

“I understand you quite,” returned Donal. “Some go to other men to draw it for them; and some go to others to tell them what they are to draw for themselves — thus getting all their blunders in addition to those they must make for themselves. But the nearest likeness you can see of him, is the one drawn by yourself from thinking about him while you do what he tells you. No other is of any vital use to you. And just here comes in the great promise he made, in itself true, and a law of God, else it could not have been a promise of Jesus — just as no scripture is of private interpretation, but is a principle that applies to all. If God were not in us at all, we should see nothing at all of his likeness. And he has promised to come himself into our hearts, to give us his spirit, the very presence of his soul to our souls, talking in language that cannot be uttered because it is too great and strong and fine for any words of ours. So will he be much nearer to us than even his personal presence to us would be; and so we shall see him, and be able to draw for ourselves the likeness of God. But first of all, and before everything else, mind, Davie, OBEDIENCE!”

“Yes, Mr. Grant; I know,” said Davie.

“Then off with you to the games God has given you.”

“I’m going to fly my kite, Mr. Grant.”

“Do. God likes to see you fly your kite. Don’t forget it is all in his March wind it flies. It could not go up a foot but for that.”

Davie went, but Arctura did not follow him.

“You have heard that my uncle is very poorly, to-day?” she said.

“I have. Poor man!” said Donal.

“He is in a very peculiar condition.”

“Of body and mind both, I should think. He greatly perplexes me.”

“You would be quite as much perplexed even if you had known him so long as I have: never since my father’s death, which seems a century ago, have I felt safe; and never in my uncle’s presence at ease. I seem not to get any nearer to him as the weeks go past! And do you know, Mr. Grant, it seems to me that the cause of all discomfort and strife is never that we are too near others, but that we are not near enough.”

This was a remark after Donal’s own heart.

“I understand you,” he said, “and entirely agree with you.”

“I never feel that my uncle cares a straw for me except as one of the family, and the possessor of its chief property. He might have liked me better, perhaps, if I had been dependent on him, instead of he in a measure on me: it sounds very horrid, but one gets compelled to look some things in the face.”

“How long will he be your guardian?” asked Donal.

“ He is no longer my guardian legally. The time set by my father’s will was over last month. I am three and twenty and my own mistress. But of course my father’s brother is welcome to live in my house as long as he pleases. It is much better for me too to have the head of the house to protect me. I only wish he were a little more like other people. But this is not what I wanted to talk to you of. — Tell me about the ghost-music : we had not time to talk about it last night ! ”

“ I got pretty near, at least so it seemed, to the place it came from. The wind blew so, and it was so dark, that I could do nothing more then.”

“ But you will try again on the first opportunity ? ”

“ I will not wait for one.”

“ But I shall be rather sorry, to tell the truth, if you find out it has indeed a natural cause.”

“ For that matter, my lady, how can there be any other than a natural cause ? A cause is either a natural, so a rational cause, or it is only a pseudo cause, that is no cause at all. God and Nature are one. God is the causing Nature. I should be sorry to take my measure of the rational or natural from the judgment of those who in any way deny him. The truth is the only thing worth having ; and if there were anything more beautiful than the truth in the imagination of man, we might be sure that either it was, or had been and would be again, or had only been sent to man first, perhaps through him to be realized. — You may have remarked that the music is heard only in stormy nights, or at least nights when a good deal of wind is blowing ? ”

“ I have heard it in the daytime.”

“ But on a windy day ? ”

“ When you mention it, I think so, I am at least certain I never heard it on a still summer night. ”

“ Do you think it comes in all storms ? ”

“ I think not. But what of that ? ”

“ That perhaps it has something to do not merely with the wind, but with the direction of the wind ! ”

“ I cannot say you enlighten me much ! ”

“ Might not that account for the uncertainty of its times and seasons ? The instrument might be a fixed and accessible one, yet the opportunity of investigation so rare that its immediate converse with the operative power had never been observed. It is a case, as you see, in which experiment is not permitted us ; we cannot make the wind blow when we will, neither can we vary the direction of the wind blowing where it lists : observation alone is left us, and that of course can only be at such times as the wind blows and the sound is heard. ”

“ Then how can you do anything till such another wind comes and sets the music going ? ”

“ Last night I got so near the place whence the sounds seemed to come, that I think now the eye may supplement the ear, and come upon the music-bird silent on her nest. ”

“ What if you find nothing. ”

“ Something there may be for all that. I may even find the wrong thing, and yet the right thing be there. If the wind falls, as I think it will by the time school is over in the afternoon, I will go again and see what I can find. One thing I noticed last night, that the sound came first at a sudden change of the wind — towards the southeast, I think — a less usual quarter

for it to come from. It was blowing in a wild way about the house last night."

Lady Arctura's eyes opened wide.

"I think," she said, "the wind has something to do with my uncle's worst fits. Do you mean there was anything very strange about it last night? When the wind blows so angrily, those words always come to me—'The prince of the power of the air, the spirit that works in the children of disobedience.'"

"I do not know what that means," answered Donal, "but I suspect it has nothing to do with things of the sort. I suppose the epithet involves a symbol of the difference between the wind of God that inspires the spiritual true self of man, and the wind of the world that works by thousands of impulses and influences in the lower, the selfish self of children that will not obey. I will look at the passage and see what I can make out of it. Only the spiritual and the natural blend so that we may one day be astonished. Would you like to join the search, my lady?"

"You don't mean to go on the roof? Should I be able?"

"I would not have you go in the night, with the wind blowing," said Donal with a laugh, "but you can at least look out and see, and judge for yourself. I could make it quite easy for you. When I tell you I mean to take Davie with me, you may think I do not count it very dangerous!"

"But will it be safe enough for Davie?"

"I can venture more with Davie than with another because he obeys in a moment."

"I will promise to obey too, if you will take me," said Arctura.

“Then be at the schoolroom at four o’clock, my lady. But we will not go except the wind be fallen.”

“All right!” said Arctura, who, as soon as she heard that Davie would be of the party, was as ready to go as Davie himself.

When Davie heard what his tutor proposed for him he was filled with the restlessness of anticipated delight. Often while helping Donal to get up his stock of fuel, he had gazed at the roof with longing eyes; but Donal had never let him go upon it, reserving the pleasure for the time when he could have thorough confidence in him. It was to him the prospect of a grand adventure.

The hour came, and with the very stroke of the clock Lady Arctura was at the schoolroom door. A moment and lessons were over, and the three set out to climb the spiral stair, as Davie now always called the spiral of the north tower.

But what a change had passed upon Lady Arctura! She was cheerful, merry — with Davie almost jolly. I speak of this afternoon. Her day had many alternating glooms; but it was seldom so clouded as of late. If even in the solitude of her chamber, where most the simple soul is conscious of life as a blessedness, she was yet mostly haunted by clouds of gloom and fear, yet other forms also had there begun to haunt her: sweetest rays of hope would ever and anon break through the clouds, and mock the darkness from the room. She was beginning to be able to think that perhaps God might mean as thoroughly well by her as even her imagination could wish. Does some dull reader remark that hers was a diseased condition of mind?—I answer. All the more

did she need to be delivered from it, and that with the only real deliverance from any and all misery. But her indubitable misery, however diseased, was infinitely more reasonable than the fancied health of those who never trouble themselves. Some sicknesses are better than any but the very best health. She tripped lightly along with Davie, Donal following. Davie told her he had no idea what a jolly girl she was.

“I did not know you were like this!” he said. “A body would think you had been at school with Mr. Grant. Oh, you don’t know how much happier it is to have somebody you must mind.”

Donal heard this last remark, and spoke.

“If having me, Davie, dosen’t help you to do just as well and be as happy without as with me, it will be all in vain.”

“Mr. Grant! How can I be so happy without you as with you! It is not reasonable to expect it— is it now?”

“Perhaps I should not have said *happy*,” answered Donal, who never refused to be put right. “What I mean is, *as able to go on and order your ways aright*.—What I want most of all to teach you,” he added, “is to leave the door on the latch for some one — you know whom I mean — to come in.”

This he said more for the sake of the less declared pupil.

“Race me up the stair, Arkie,” said Davie when they came to the foot of the spiral.

“Very well,” assented his cousin.

“Which side will you have—the broad or the narrow?”

“The broad.”

“Well then — one, two, three, and away we go!”

Davie mounted like a clever goat, his hand and arm thrown about the newel, and slipping easily round it. Arctura's ascent was easier but slower, and she found her garments in her way. She gave it up and waited for Donal, who was ascending leisurely. Davie, thinking he heard her footsteps behind him, flew up shrieking with the sweet terror of the imagined pursuit of love.

“What a sweet boy he is!” said Arctura, when Donal overtook her.

“Yes,” answered Donal; “one cannot help fancying such a child might run straight into the kingdom of heaven. Yet I suppose he must have his temptations and trials before he will be fit for it. It is out of the storm alone that the true peace comes.”

“Then I may hope that what I have got to go through will not be lost, but will serve some good in me?”

There had never been any allusion to her trouble between them, but Donal took it as understood, and answered,

“Doubtless. Every pain and every fear, yes, every doubt is a cry after God. What mother refuses to go to her child because he is only crying, not calling her by name!”

“Oh, if I could but think that! It would be so delightful — I mean, to be able to think that about God! For don't you think, if it be all right with God — I mean, if God be such a God that we can love him with all our heart and all our strength of loving, then all is well? Is it not so, Mr. Grant?”

“Indeed it is! — And you are not far from the

kingdom of heaven," he was on the point of saying, but did not, because she was in it already — only unable yet to verify the things around her, like the man who had but half-way received his sight.

When they reached the top, he took them past his door, and higher up the stair to another, opening on the roof, upon which they at once stepped out. Donal told Davie to keep close to Lady Arctura and follow him. He led them first to his stores of fuel, his ammunition, he said, for fighting the winter. Then he showed them where he was when first he heard the music the night before, and threw down his bucket to follow it, and how when he came back he had to feel for it in the dark. Then he began to lead them, as nearly as he could, the way he had then gone, but with some detours for their sakes desirable. One steep-sloping roof they had to cross, but it had a little stair of its own up the middle of it, and down the other side. They came at last, however, to a part over which, seeing it in the daylight, he was not quite sure about taking them. Stopping to bethink himself, they all turned and looked behind. The sun was approaching the sea, and shone so bright over the flat wet country that they could not tell where the sea began and the land ended. But as they looked a great cloud came over the sun, and the sea turned cold and gray like death — a true March sea, and the land lay low and desolate between. The spring was gone, and the winter was there. A gust of wind, full of keen dashing hail, drove sharp in their faces.

"Ah, that settles the question!" said Donal. "We must not go any farther just at present. The music bird must wait. We will call upon her another day.

It is funny, isn't it. Davie, to go a bird's-nesting after music on the roof of the house !”

“Hark !” said Arctura ; “I think I heard it ! The music bird wants us to find her nest ! I really don't think we ought to go back for a little blast of wind, and a few pellets of hail ! What do you think, Davie ?”

“Oh, for me ; I don't think I would turn for ever so big a storm,” said Davie ; “but you know, Arkie, it's not you or me, it's Mr. Grant that's the captain of this expedition, and we must do as he bids us.”

“Oh, surely, Davie ! I never meant to dispute that. Only Mr. Grant is not a tyrant, and will let a lady say what she thinks.”

“Oh, yes, he likes me to say what I think ; he says we can't get at each other otherwise. And do you know he obeys me sometimes !”

Arctura glanced a keen question at the boy.

“It is quite true,” said Davie. “Last winter, for days together, not all day, you know, I had to obey him most of the time : but at certain times I was as sure of Mr. Grant doing as I told him as he is now of me doing as he tells me.”

“What were those times,” asked Arctura, thinking to hear of some odd pedagogic device.

“It was when I was teaching him to skate,” answered Davie, with a kind of triumph. “He said I knew better than he did there, and therefore he would obey me. And you wouldn't believe how he did it — out and out !” concluded Davie, in a voice of something almost like awe.

“Oh, yes, I would believe it — perfectly well !” said Arctura.

Here Donal suddenly threw an arm round each of them, for he stood between them, and pulled them down sitting. The same instant a fierce blast burst upon the roof. Donal had seen the squall whitening the sea, and looking nearer home saw the tops of the trees all streaming towards the castle. It fell upon them-with fury. But seated they were in no danger, for they were almost under the lee of a parapet.

“Hark!” said Arctura again, “there it is!”

And they all heard the wailing cry of the ghost-music. But while the blast continued they dared not prosecute their hunt after it. Still they heard it. It kept on in fits and gusts of sound, till the squall ceased, as suddenly almost as it had risen. Then the sky was again clear, and the sun shone out as a March sun can between the blundering blasts and the swan-shot of the flying hail.

“When the storm is upon us,” said Donal, as they rose from their crouching position, “it seems as if there never could be any sunshine more; but our hopelessness does not keep back the sun when his hour to shine is come.”

“I understand,” said Arctura. “When one is miserable, misery seems the law of being. There is some thought which it seems nothing can ever set right; but all at once it is gone, broken up and gone, like that hail-cloud. Without any argument all at once it will look its own foolishness and vanish.”

“Do you know why things so often come right?” said Donal. “I would say *always come right*, only that is matter of faith, not sight.”

“I think I know what you are thinking, but I do not want to answer,” said Arctura.

“Why do things come right so often, Davie, do you think?” repeated Donal.

“Is it,” returned Davie, “because they were made right to begin with?”

“There is much in that, Davie; but there is a better reason than that. It is because things are all alive, and the life at the heart of them, that which keeps them going, is the great, beautiful God. So the sun forever returns after the clouds. A doubting man, like him who wrote the book of Ecclesiastes, puts the evil last, and says the clouds return after the rain; but the Christian knows that

One has mastery
Who makes the joy the last in every song.

Those are the words of faith.”

“You speak always like one who has suffered!” said Arctura, with a kind look up at him.

“Who has not that lives at all?”

“That is how you are able to help others!”

“Am I able to help others! I am very glad to hear it. My ambition would be to help other people, if I had any ambition. But if I am so able, it must be because I have been helped myself, not because I have suffered.”

“But what do you mean by saying if you had any ambition?”

“Where your work is laid out for you, there is no room for ambition. You have got your work to do! But give me your hand, my lady; put your other hand on my shoulder. You stop there, Davie, and don't move till I come to you. Now, my lady, a little jump!

That's it! Now you are safe! You were not afraid, were you?"

"Not in the least — with you to help me. But did you come here in the dark?"

"Yes; but there is sometimes an advantage in the dark; you do not see how dangerous the way is. We sometimes take the darkness about us for the source of all our difficulties, but that may be a great mistake. Christian would hardly have dared go through the valley of the shadow of death had he not had the shield of the darkness about him."

"Can the darkness be a shield? Is not the dark the evil thing?"

"Yes, the dark of distrust and unwillingness, not the dark of mere human ignorance. Where we do not see we are protected. And what can our self-protection do for us by day any more than by night? The things that are really dangerous to us are those that affect the life of the image of the living God; we are so ignorant about that as yet, though it is our deepest nature that there the Father must every moment take care of his child. If he were not, for instance, constantly pardoning our sins, what would become of us! We should soon be overwhelmed with our wrong doings, not to say our mistakes and blunders. But in him we live and move and have our being, which surely means that we are pretty close to him. Ah, yes, we must learn to trust him about our faults as well as about everything else." Donal had stopped in the earnestness of his talk, but now turning to go on. "There is my mark!" he said, "that chimney-stack! I was close by it when I heard the music very near me indeed: but then all at once

it grew so dark with clouds deepening over the moon that I could do nothing more. We shall do better now in the daylight, and three of us together!"

"What a huge block of chimney!" said Arctura.

"Is it not!" returned Donal. "It indicates the greatness of the building below us, of which we can see so little. It is like the volcanoes of the world, telling us how much fire is necessary to keep the old earth warm."

"I thought it was the sun that kept the earth warm," said Davie.

"So it is, but not the sun alone. The earth is like the human heart. The great glowing fire is God in the heart of the earth, and the great sun is God in the sky, keeping it warm on the other side. Your gladness and pleasure, your trouble when you do wrong, your love for all about you, that is God inside you; and all the beautiful things and lovable people, all the lessons you get, and whatever comes to you, is God outside of you. Every life is between two great fires of love of God, that is, so long as we do not give ourselves up right heartily to him, we fear the fire will burn us. And so it does when we go against its flames and not with them, refusing to burn with the same glorious fire with which God is always burning. When we try to put it out, or get away from it, then indeed it burns."

"I think I know," said Davie. But Arctura held her peace.

"But now," said Donal, "I must go round and have a peep at the other side of the chimneys."

He disappeared, and Arctura and Davie stood waiting his return. They looked each in the other's

face with delight, as if in the conscious sharing of the great adventure. Beyond their feet lay the wide country and the great sea; over them the sky with the sun in it going down towards the sea; under their feet the mighty old pile that was their house; and under that the earth with its molten heart of fire. But Davie's look was in reality one of triumph in his tutor. It said, "Is it not grand to be all day with a man like that, talking to you and teaching you?" That at least was how Arctura interpreted his look. It seemed almost an assertion of superiority to her, in as much as this man was his tutor and not hers; and she replied to the thing unspoken, perhaps unthought except by herself.

"I am his pupil, too, Davie," she said, "though I do not think Mr. Grant knows it."

"How can that be," answered Davie, "when you are afraid of him? I am not a bit afraid of him!"

"How do you know that I am afraid of him?" she asked.

"Oh, anybody could see that!"

Since she turned the talk on Donal, Arctura had not cared to look the boy in the face. She was afraid she had spoken foolishly, and Davie might repeat her words. She did not quite wish to hasten any further intimacy with him; things seemed going in that direction fast enough. Her eyes avoiding Davie's countenance, kept reconnoitring the stack of chimneys.

"Ain't you glad to have such a castle to call your own — to do what you like with, Arkie? You could pull it all to pieces if you liked!"

"Would it be less mine," said Arctura, "if I were

not at liberty to pull it to pieces? And would it be mine when I had pulled it to pieces, Davie?"

Donal had come round the other side of the stack, and heard what she said. It pleased him, for it was not a little in his own style.

"What makes a thing your own, do you think, Davie?" she went on.

"To be able to do with it what you like," replied Davie.

"Whether it be good or bad?"

"Yes, I think so," answered Davie, doubtfully.

"There I think you are quite wrong," she rejoined. "The moment you begin to use a thing wrong, that moment you make it less yours. I can't quite explain it, but that is how it looks to me."

She ceased and after a moment Donal took up the question.

"Lady Arctura is quite right, Davie," he said.

"The nature, that is the use of a thing, is that only by which it can be possessed. Any other possession is like a slave-owning, not a righteous having. The right to use to the true purpose and the power to do so, is what makes a thing ours. I am not thinking of the law in what I say, but of the nature of things. Suppose you had a very beautiful picture, but from some defect in your sight you could never see that picture as it really was, while a servant in the house not only saw it as it was meant to be seen, but had such an intense delight in gazing at it that even in his dreams it came to him and made him think of many things he would not have thought of but for knowing it—which of you, you or the servant in your house, would have the more real possession of

that picture? You could sell it away from yourself, and never know anything about it, but you could not by all the power of a tyrant take away that picture from your servant."

"Ah! now I understand," said Davie, with a look at lady Arctura which seemed to say, "You see how Mr. Grant can make me understand."

"I wonder," said Lady Arctura, "what that curious opening in the side of the chimney stack means. It can't be meant for the smoke to come out at."

"No," said Donal; "there is not a mark of smoke about it. Besides if it had been meant for that, it would hardly have been put half-way from the top. I can't make it out. A hole like that in any chimney would surely interfere with the draught. The mouth of that chimney seems to be up among the rest of them. I must get a ladder and see whether it be a chimney."

"If you were to put me up on your shoulders," said Davie, "I should be able to see into the hole."

"Come then; up you go," said Donal.

And up went Davie standing on his tutor's shoulders, and peeped into the slit which ran horizontally across.

"It looks very like a chimney," he said, turning his head and thrusting it in sideways. "It goes right down to somewhere," he said. "But there is something across it a little way down — to prevent the jackdaws from getting in, I suppose."

"What is it?" asked Donal.

"Something like a grating," answered Davie, "—no, not a grating exactly. It is what you might call a grating, but it seems made of wires all run-

ning one way. I don't think it would keep a strong bird out if he wanted to get in."

"Aha!" said Donal to himself, "I suspect there is something here. What if those wires were tuned! Did you ever see an Æolian harp, my lady?" he asked. — "I never did."

"Yes," answered Lady Arctura, "—once when I was a little girl. And now you suggest it, I think the sounds we hear are not unlike those of an Æolian harp! The strings are all about the same length, I remember that—only differently tuned. But I do not understand the principle of it at all. Somehow they all play together, and make the strangest, wildest harmonies, when the wind blows across them in a particular way."

"I fancy we have found the nest of our music-bird," said Donal. "The wires Davie speaks of may be the strings of an Æolian harp! I wonder if there is any possibility of a draught across them! I must get up and see! I will go and get a ladder."

"But how *could* there be an Æolian harp up here?" said Arctura.

"Something is here," answered Donal, "which needs accounting for; it may be an Æolian harp."

"But in a chimney! the soot would spoil the strings!"

"Then perhaps it is not a chimney: is there any sign of soot about, Davie?"

"No, sir; there is nothing but pretty clean stone and lime."

"You see, my lady, that we do not even know that this is a chimney!"

"What else could it be, standing with the rest?"

“At least it has never served the uses of a chimney, so far as we can see. It may have been built for one : if it had ever been used for one, the marks of smoke would remain, had it been disused ever so long. But now we will go, and to-morrow I will come up with a ladder.”

“Will you not get it now?” said Arctura. “I should so like to be there when it was found out.”

“As you please, my lady. I will go at once and get a ladder. There is one not far from the bottom of the tower.”

“If you do not mind the trouble ; I should so like to see the end of the thing !”

“I will come and help you carry it,” said Davie.

“You mustn't leave your cousin alone. Besides, I am not sure I can get it up the stair, I am afraid it is too long. Anyhow you could not very well help me. If I find I cannot get it up that way, we will rig up our old tackle and fetch it up as we did the fuel.”

He went, and the cousins sat down to wait his return. It was a cold evening, but Arctura was well wrapt up, and Davie was hardy. They sat at the foot of the chimneys and began to talk.

“It is such a long time since you told me anything, Arkie !” said the boy.

“You do not need me now to tell you anything You have Mr. Grant. You like him much better than ever you did me !”

“You see,” said Davie, not denying the assertion, “he began by making me a little afraid of him — not that he meant to do that, I think ; he only meant that I *should* do what he told me. I was never afraid of you, Arkie !”

“ Yet I was much crosser to you than Mr. Grant, I am sure.”

“ Mr. Grant is never cross ; and if ever you were, I have forgotten it, Arkie. I only remember that I was not good to you. I am sorry for it now when I lie awake in bed ; but I say to myself you forgive me, and go to sleep.”

“ What makes you think I forgive you, Davie ? ” said Arctura.

“ Because I love you.”

This was not very logical, and set Arctura thinking. She did not forgive the boy because he loved her ; but the boy's love to her might make him sure she forgave him. Love is its own justification, and sees its reflection in all its objects. Forgiveness is an essential belonging of love, and cannot be parted from it.”

“ Are you very fond of my brother ? ” asked Davie after a pause.

“ Why do you ask me that ? ”

“ Because they say you and he are going to be married some day, and yet you don't seem to care to be much together.”

“ It is all nonsense,” replied Arctura, reddening. “ I wish people would not talk such foolishness ! ”

“ Well, I do think he is not so fond of you as of Eppie.”

“ Hush ! hush ! you must not talk of such things.”

“ But, I've seen him kiss Eppie, and I never saw him kiss you.”

“ No, indeed ! ”

“ But is it right of Forgue, if he is going to marry you, to kiss Eppie ? — that's what I want to know ! ”

“But he is not going to marry me.”

“He would, if you told him you wished it. Papa wishes it very much.”

“How do you know that?”

“From many things I have heard him say. Once he said, ‘Afterwards, when the house is our own,’ and I asked him what he meant by it, and he said, ‘When Forgue marries your pretty cousin, then the castle will be Forgue’s. That will be how it ought to be, you know; for property and title ought never to be parted.’”

The hot blood rose to Arctura’s temples; was she a thing to be flung in as a makeweight to property? But she called to mind how strange her uncle was, and how he had been growing ever stranger. Surely but for that he would not, whatever he might think, have been guilty of the imprudence of talking in that way to a boy whose very simplicity rendered him the more dangerous!

“You would not like to have to give away your castle, would you, Arkie?” he went on.

“Not to any one I did not love.”

“If I were you, I would not marry any one, but keep my castle to myself. I don’t see why Forgue or any one else should have your castle?”

“Then you think I should make my castle my husband?”

“He would be a good big husband anyhow, and a strong one, and one that would defend you from your enemies, and not talk when you wanted to be quiet.”

“That is all very true; but one might for all that get a little weary of such a stupid husband, however big and strong he might be.”

“ But he would never be a cruel husband ! I have heard papa say a great deal about some cruel husbands ; it seemed sometimes as if he meant himself ; but that could not be, because papa could never have been a cruel husband.”

Arctura made no reply. All but vanished memories of things she had heard when a child, hints and signs here and there that all was not right between her uncle and aunt vaguely returned. Could it be that now at last he was repenting of harshness to his wife, and the thought of it was preying upon him, and driving him to a refuge of lies ? But in the presence of the boy she could not think thus about his father, and was relieved by the return of Donal.

He had found it rather a difficult job to get the ladder round the sharp curves of the stair ; but now at last they saw him with it upon his shoulder coming over a distant part of the roof.

“ Now we shall see,” he said, as he set it down, leaned it up against the chimney, and stood panting.

“ You have tired yourself out,” said Lady Arctura, “ with that ladder.”

“ Well, where’s the harm, my lady, in that ? A man was meant to get tired a good many times before he lies down for the last time ! ” rejoined Donal lightly.

Said Davie, “ Was a woman meant, Mr. Grant, to marry a man she does not love ? ”

“ No, certainly, Davie.”

“ Mr. Grant,” said Arctura, in dread of what Davie might say next, “ what do you take to be the chief duty of one belonging to an ancient family, and inheriting a large property ? Ought a woman to get rid of it, or attend to its duties herself ? ”

Donal thought a little. "We must first settle what is the main duty of property, and that I am hardly prepared to discuss."

"But is there not a duty owing to the family?"

"There are a thousand duties owing to the family."

"I don't mean those you are living with, but those who are gone before you, and have left the property to you."

"The property called mine belongs to my family rather than to me, and if there had been a son it would have gone to him. Should I not be doing better for the family by giving it up to the next heir, and letting him manage it? I am not disinterested quite in starting the question, for power and property are of no great importance in my eyes. To me they are rather hindrances in the path I want to walk in."

"It seems to me," said Donal, "that the fact that you would not have succeeded had there been a son, points to another fact, that there has been another disposer of events concerned in the matter: you were sent into the world to take the property."

"God of course is over all, and overrules all things to his ends."

"And if he has been pleased to let the property come to you, he expects you to perform the duties of it. These are not to be got rid of by throwing the thing aside, or given to another to do instead of you. Perhaps if your first duty in regard to the property was to your family as the giver, and not to God, the question might put itself as you suggest — but I confess I have hardly interest in such matters to be capable of discussing them. I understand my duty to my sheep or cattle, to my master, to my father or

mother, to my brother or sister, to my pupil Davie here; I owe my ancestors love and honor, and the keeping of their name unspotted, though that duty is forestalled by a higher; but as to the property they leave behind them, over which they have no more power, and which now in all probability they neither value nor think about, except perhaps it be to bemoan the added difficulty it is to the escape of their children, I do not see you can be under any obligation to them beyond or other than that which is comprised in the duties of the property itself."

"But a family is not merely those that are gone before, but those that are to come after: would you say it was one's duty to get rid of property in order that those to come after might not be burdened with its temptations and responsibilities?"

"Not at least by merely shifting the difficulties from your own family to that of another. Besides, it would be to take the appointment of things into your own hands, instead of obeying the orders given you. And here again, the best thing for those to come after is to receive the property with its duties performed with the light of righteousness radiating from it."

"What then do you call the duties of property?"

"In what does the property consist?"

"In land, to begin with."

"If the land were of no value, would the possession of it involve duties?"

"I suppose not."

"In what does the value of the land consist?"

Lady Arctura did not at once attempt an answer to the questions, and Donal, after a little pause, resumed.

“ If you valued things as the world values them I should not care to put the thing to you ; but I am afraid you may have some lingering notion that God’s way is the true way, but man’s way must not be disregarded. One thing, however, must be held for certain, that nothing that is against God’s way can be true ; and therefore I say the value of property consists only in its being means, ground, or material to work his will withal. There is no success in the universe but in his will being done.”

Arctura was silent. She had inherited prejudices which, while she hated selfishness, were yet thoroughly selfish. Those belong to the evils in us hardest to get rid of. They are even cherished for a lifetime by some of the otherwise loveliest of souls. Therefore knowing that here she must think, and would think, Donal went no farther for the time : a house must have its foundations well settled before they are built upon ; argument where the grounds of it are in dispute, is worse than useless. He turned to his ladder, set it up carefully, mounted, and peered into the opening. At the length of his arm he could reach the wires Davie had described : they were taut, and free of rust — were therefore not iron or steel. He saw also that a little down the shaft light came in from the opposite side — there was an opening there too. Next he saw that each following string — for strings he already counted them, itself horizontal — was placed a little lower than that before it, so that their succession was inclined to the other side and downwards, apparently in a plane between the two openings, that a draught might pass along them in one plane, and that their own plane : this must surely

be the instrument whence the music flowed! He descended.

“Do you know, my lady,” he asked Arctura, “how the Æolian harp is placed in relation to the wind that wakes it?”

“The only one I have seen,” she answered, “was made to fit into a window, in which the lower sash was opened just wide enough to let it in, so that the wind entering must pass across the strings.”

Then Donal was satisfied — he was at least all but certain.

“Of course,” he said to Arctura, after describing to her the whole arrangement, “we cannot be absolutely certain until we have been here present with the music, and have experimented by covering and uncovering the opening. For that we must wait the next southeast wind.”

“I should so much like to be here,” she said, “when it comes!”

“If it be neither dark, nor in the middle of the night,” said Donal, “nothing will be easier.” So they descended and parted.

CHAPTER XXI.

MEETING OF THE THREE.

BUT Donal did not feel that even then would he have exhausted the likelihood of discovery. That the source of the music that had so long haunted the house was an Æolian harp in a chimney that had never or scarcely been used, might be enough for the other dwellers in the castle, but Donal wanted to know as well why, if this was a chimney, it had been seldom and was never used; also to what room it was a chimney. For the thought had struck him — could the music have anything to do with the main legend that hung vaporous about the ancient house? Perhaps he might not so immediately have sought a possible connection between the two, but that the talk about the unknown room in the castle had gone on spreading; inquiry after popular legendary lore had come nearer and nearer, and that had naturally increased the talk about it. At the same time were heard occasional and increasing hints as to a ghost being even now seen at times about the castle. As to this latter, Donal had concluded that one or more of the domestics might have had a glimpse of the earl in his restless night walks about the house, and had either imagined a ghost or had chosen to use the memory of their own fright to produce like effect upon yielded listeners. With all

its vagueness, the report was yet, as was natural, associated with that of the lost chamber, as if from that the spectre issued, and to that he returned. Various were the conjectures as to what ghost it might be — among the few who were inclined to believe in such things, according to the version of the story adopted. Donal, by nature strongly urged towards the roots of things, could not fail to let his mind rest at times even on such a comparatively unimportant rumor of mystery, and cherish a desire to discover whether any or how much truth was at the root of it — for a root, great or small, there must be to everything — even the greatest lie that was ever told — a root that is, if not in the material, then in the moral world. But he had no right to go prying about the place, or doing anything which if known might be disagreeable. He must take an opportunity of first suggesting the idea to Lady Arc-tura! By the way she took it he would be guided. For the present he must wait!

His spare hours were now much occupied with his friend, Andrew Comin. The good man had so far recovered as to think himself able to work again; but he soon found it was very little he could do. His strength was gone, and the exertion necessary to the lightest labor caused him pain. It was sad to watch him on his stool, now putting in a stitch, now stopping for the cough which so sorely haunted his thin, wind-blown tent. His face had grown very white and thin, and he had nearly lost his merriment, though not his cheerfulness, for he never looked other than quite content however things were with him. He had made up his mind that he was not to

get better, but was to go home through a lingering illness. He was ready to go and ready to linger, as God pleased. Nor was there anything wonderful in its being so with such a man. To most it will appear more wonderful that he had no uneasiness as to how his Doory would fare when he was gone. The house was their own, but there was no money in it—not even enough to pay the taxes; and if she sold it, the proceeds would not be enough for her to live upon. The neighbors with the instinct of inferior natures, were severe upon Andrew's indifference to her welfare, manifest, they judged, in his great cheerfulness on the brink of the grave; but scarce one of them knew the world of faith in which he lived, or could have understood that for the cobbler to allow the smallest danger of things going wrong for Doory, would have been to go down to the grave with the feeling that the universe was upheld only in the slippery arms of chance.

A little moan escaping from Doory, as she looked one evening into her money-teapot, made Donal ask her a question or two. She confessed that she had but a sixpence left. Now Donal had spent next to nothing since he came, and had therefore a few pounds in hand. His father and mother, he knew, were in want of nothing; his friend Sir Gibbie Galbraith was such a good son to them that, compared with foregone hardships, never at the time counted such, they were now living in luxury. Old Robert doubted whether he was not ministering to the flesh in letting Janet provide beef-brose for him twice in the week. So Donal was free to spend for the friends next him—which was just what the people

at home, who were grand in the way they thought about money, would have approved of. Never in that little cottage had a penny been wasted; never once one refused where there was immediate need.

But first he must talk to Andrew.

"An'rew," he said, "I'm thinkin' ye maun be growin' some short o' siller i' thae times o' warklessness!"

"Deed, I wadna won'er!" answered Andrew, "Doory says naething about sic triffl'es."

"Well," returned Donal, "thank God I hae some i' the ill pickle o' no bein' itherwise wantit, an' sae in danger o' cankerin'; an' atween brithers there sudna be twa purses."

"Ye hae yer ain fowk to luik efter, sir," said Andrew.

"They're weel luikit efter — better nor ever they war i' their lives — they're as weel aff as I am mysel' up i' yon gran' castle. They hae a freen wha but for them, or somebody i' their stead, wad ill hae lived to be the great man he is the noo; an' there's naething ower muckle for him to do for them; sae my siller's my ain to do wi' as I like — an' I like you an' Doory, as ye weel ken, better onybody but a feow auld freens."

Thereupon the old man put him through a catechism as to his ways and means and prospects, and finding that Donal believed as firmly as himself in the care of the master, and was convinced there was nothing that master would rather see him do with his money than help those who needed it, especially those who trusted in him, he yielded.

"It's no, ye see," said Donal, "that I hae ony doobt o' the Lord providin' gien I had failt, but he

hauds the thing to my han', just as muckle as gien he said, 'there's for you to du, Donal!' The fowk o' this warl', An'rew, micht say it was hard on a puir student to hae to pairt his hard won cash; but you an' me kens better, An'rew. We ken there's nae guid in siller, ony mair than in onything ither, but to do the wull o' the Lord wi' it—an' help to ane anither is the thing he likes best to see come o' the siller. It's no 't he's short himsel', ye ken, Andrew!"

"Weel, I'll tak it," said the old man.

"There's what I hae," returned Donal, handing him the money.

"Na, na; nane o' that!" said Andrew. "Ye're treatin' me like a muckle receivin' sornin' beggar—offerin' me a' that at ance! Whaur syne wad be the prolonged sweetness o' haein' 't frae yer han' as frae the neb o' an angel-corbie sent frae varra hame wi' yer denner." Here shone a glimmer of the old merriment through the worn look and pale eyes.—"Na, na, sir," he went on; "jist talk the thing ower wi' Doory, an' lat her hae what she wants an' nae mair. She wadna like it. Wha kens what may come i' the meantime—Deith himsel', maybe! Or see—gie Doory a five shillins, an' whan that's done she can lat ye ken."

Donal was forced to leave it thus, but he did his utmost to impress upon Doory that all he had was at her disposal.

"I got new clothes," he said, "just before I came; I have all I can possibly want to eat, and drink, and much more; and for books, there's a whole ancient library at my service!—what can I want more? It's just a mere luxury to hand the money

over to you, Doory. I'm thinkin', Doory," for he had got by this time to address the old woman by her husband's pet name for her, "there's naebody i' this warl', 'cep' the oonseen Lord himsel', lo'es yer man sae weel as you an' me. Weel ken I you an' him wad share yer last crust wi' me; an' I'm only giein' ye o' yer ain good wull whan ye tak sae lang as I hae onything."

Thus adjured the old woman made no difficulty; if her husband was satisfied, she was satisfied.

The time was now drawing nigh for the return of Lord Fergue, but Eppie had learned only his absense, and nothing concerning his return. But as if she foresaw it, there was a restless light in her eyes.

When Stephen Kennedy heard that Eppie had gone back to her grandparents, a faint hope revived in his bosom; he knew nothing of the late passage between the lovers and her friends. He but knew that she was looking sad, as if she had lost her lover, and it seemed to him as if now she might at least admit him to be of some service to her. Separation had begotten more and more gentle thoughts of her in his heart; he was ready to forgive everything, and believe nothing serious against her, if only she would let him love her again. The modesty of true love had, however, restrained him from throwing himself in her way, until some time should have elapsed, allowing her to forget a little. He haunted the house, however, in the hope of getting a peep of her; and when she began to go again into the town he saw her repeatedly, following her for the sake of being near her, but taking care she should not see him, and

partly from her self-absorption, he succeeded in escaping her notice.

At length, however, one night rather more than a month after her return, he tried to summon up courage to accost her. It was a warm, lovely, moonlit night, half the street floored with quaint black shadows from the gables, the other shining like the sand on the seashore in the yellow light. On the moony side the people standing at their doors could recognize each others' faces, but in the shadow it was not easy to tell who was passing at a little distance. Eppie had gone into the baker's, whose daughter was her friend; Kennedy had seen her go in, and stood in the shadow, waiting for her to come out, and all but determined to speak to her that night if he could. She remained within a good while, but one accustomed to wait for the fish of the sea learns patience. At length she appeared. By this time, however, though not his patience, Kennedy's courage had nearly evaporated, and when he saw her coming towards him, he stepped under an archway, let her pass, and followed afresh. All at once a resolve, which yet was no resolve, awoke in him. He did not know how or whence it came. He said it was as if some one—not that he felt anything—had taken him by the shoulders and pushed him up to her. She started when he stepped in front of her, and gave a little cry.

“Dinna be feart at me, Eppie,” said Kennedy. “I wadna hurt a hair o’ yer heid. I wad raither be skinned mysel’!”

“Gang awa,” said Eppie. “Ye hae nae richt to come afore me.”

“Nane but the richt o’ lo’ein’ ye better nor ever,” said Kennedy, “gien sae be as ye’ll lat me ony gait shaw ’t!”

The words softened her: she had dreaded reproaches, if not some outbreak of indignant remonstrance. She began to cry.

“Gien onything i’ my pooer wud tak’ the grief aff o’ ye, Eppie,” said Kennedy, “ye hae but to speak—ye maun ken that! I’m no gauin’ to ask ye to merry me, for that I ken ye wudna care about; but gien I can be a freen to you or yours, or may be alloot to do onything to help i’ yer tribble, I’m ready to lay me i’ the dirt afore ye. I hae nae care for mysel’ ony mair, an’ therefore maun do something for somebody—an’ wha sae soon as yersel’, Eppie!”

For sole answer, Eppie went on crying. She was far from happy. She had nearly, she thought, persuaded herself that all was over between her and Lord Fergie, and she felt almost as if she could but for shame have allowed Kennedy to comfort her as an old friend. But everything in her mind was so confused, and everything around her so miserable that there was nothing to be done but cry. And as she continued crying, and they were in a walled lane into which no windows looked, Kennedy, in the simplicity of his heart, and the desire to comfort her, who little from him deserved comfort, came quietly, but with throbbing heart up to her, and putting his arm around her, said again:

“Dinna be feart at me, Eppie. I’m a man ower sair hertit to do ye ony hurt. It’s no as my ain, Eppie, I wad preshume to do onything for ye, but

only as an auld freen, fain to tak the dog aff o' ye. Are ye in want o' onything? Ye maun hae a heap o' tribble, I weel ken, wi' yer gran'father's mischance, an' it's but easy to un'erstan' things may weel be turnin' scarce wi' ye; but be sure o' this, that as lang's my mither has onything, she'll be blyth to share the same wi' you an' yours."

He said *his mother*, but she had nothing save what he provided for her.

"Thank ye, Stephen," said Eppie, touched with his goodness, "but there's nae necessity. We hae plenty."

She moved on, her apron still to her eyes. Kennedy followed her.

"Gien the young lord hae wranged ye ony gait," he said, "an' gien there be ony amends ye wad hae o' him" —

She turned on him with a quickness that was almost fierce, and in the dim light Kennedy saw her eyes blazing.

"I want naething frae your han', Stephen Kennedy," she said. "My lord's naething to you — nor yet muckle to me!" she added, with sudden reaction, and an outburst of self-pity, and fell a weeping and sobbing violently.

Again, with the timidity of a strong man before a girl he loves, and whose displeasure he fears, Kennedy tried to comfort her, seeking to wipe her eyes with her apron, as if that would stop her tears. While he was thus engaged, another man, turning a corner quickly, came nearly upon them. He started back, then came nearer as if to satisfy himself who they were, and spoke. It was Lord Forge.

“Eppie!” he cried, in a tone in which indignation blended with surprise.

Eppie uttered a little shriek, and ran to him. But he pushed her away.

“My lord,” said Kennedy, “the lass will nane o’ me—or my help. I sair doobt there’s nane but yoursel’ can please her. But I sweir by God, my lord, gien ye do her ony wrang, I’ll no rest, nicht nor day, till I hae made ye repent it.”

“Go to the devil!” said Forgue; “what have you to do with her? Speak out like a man, and show your right, and you may take her. I am hardly prepared to go halves with you.”

Again Eppie would have clung to him, but again he pushed her away.

“Oh, my lord!” and could go no farther for weeping. This touched him.

“How is it I find you here with this man,” he said. “I don’t want to be unfair to you, but you will own this is rather too much.”

“My lord,” said Kennedy.

“Hold your tongue and let her speak for herself and you too.”

“I had no tryst wi’ him, my lord! I never bade him come near me,” sobbed Eppie. “—Ye see what ye hae done!” she went on turning in anger upon Kennedy, and her tears suddenly ceasing; “never but ill hae ye brocht upo’ me! What business had ye to come after me this gait, an’ mak’ mischief ’atween my lord an’ me? Can a body no set fut ayont the door-sill, but they maun be follow’t o’ them they wad see far eneuch?”

Kennedy turned without a word and went. Eppie

with a fresh burst of tears turned to go also. But she had satisfied Forgue that there was nothing between them, and taking his turn he was soon more successful than Kennedy in consoling her.

He had while absent been able enough to get on without her, but no sooner was he home than, in the weary lack of anything else to interest him, the feelings he had begun to think, without knowing whether to lament or rejoice over them, on the point of being lost, began to revive, and he had set out to gain if possible a sight of Eppie, whom, when he saw in such close relations, as it appeared, with her old lover, first a sense of unpardonable injury possessed him, and next the conviction that he was, as he called it, as madly in love with her as ever. Satisfied that the interview had not been of her seeking, neither was to her satisfaction, he felt the tide of old tenderness come streaming back over the ghastly sands of jealousy, and ere they parted he had made with her an appointment to meet the next night in a more suitable spot.

Before Eppie re-entered the house she did her best to remove all traces of the varied emotions she had undergone, but she could not help the shining of her eyes, for the joy lamp relighted in her bosom shone through them. Donal was seated by her grandfather reading; he had now the opportunity of reading to him many things of which the old man had no idea that such existed. I believe those last days of sickness and weakness were among the most blessed of his life; things could be done for a man like him which could not be done for even many a good man with ten times his education. He looked up when

Eppie entered, and the same moment Donal knew her secret — not from her face, but from Andrew's; the grandfather read it from hers, and Donal read it from his. “She has seen Fergie!” he said to himself, and added, “I hope the old man will be dead before she comes to worse!”

CHAPTER XXII.

ADVICE REJECTED.

WHEN Lord Morven heard of his son's return he sent for Donal, received him in a friendly way, gave him to understand that, however he might fail to fall in with his views, he depended thoroughly on whatever he said or undertook, and made to him the request that he would keep him informed of anything he might be able to discover with regard to his son's proceedings.

"I am told the girl has gone back to her relations," he concluded.

Donal replied that while he fully acknowledged his lordship's right to know what his son was doing, there were others concerned also, and he did not feel at liberty to pledge himself to anything—certainly he could not consent to watch Lord Fergue, which would be neither more nor less than to take the position of a spy.

"I will however warn him," he concluded, "that I may see it right to let his father know what he is about. I fancy, however, he knows that pretty well already."

"Pooh! that would be only to give him warning—to teach him the necessity for the more cunning!" said the earl.

"I can do nothing underhand," replied Donal.

“I will help no man to keep an unrighteous secret, but neither will I secretly disclose it.”

Meeting Forgue a few days after, his lordship would have passed him without recognition, but Donal stopped him and said

“I believe, my lord, you have seen Eppie since your return.”

“What the deuce is that to you?”

“I wish your lordship to understand that whatever comes to my knowledge concerning your proceedings in regard to her, I consider myself at perfect liberty to report to your father if I see fit; he has a right to know of them.”

“Thank you! the warning was quite unnecessary. Still it is an advantage few informers would have given me, and I thank you, for so far I am indebted to you. It does nothing however, to redeem you from the shame of such a profession!”

“When your lordship has proved himself an honorable gentleman, it will begin to be possible for me to take some shadow of interest in what your lordship may judge of my proceedings. In the meantime it is no more to me than what you rook up there thinks.”

“As much as to say you do not think me an honorable man!” said Forgue with a sneer.

“Only at present that I continue in doubt of you. Time will show what is in you. Now I do not think you know it yourself. For God’s sake, my lord, look to your own soul!”

“Such threats are no more to me than the black man of the nursery. I would rather do wrong for love than right for fear.”

“Threats, my lord!” repeated Donal. “Is it a threat to warn you not to make your consciousness a curse to you? To tell you that to know yourself may by your own deed be made a torture to you? that you may bring yourself like Macbeth to dwell in the midst of trembling, to make it the first care of your life to forget that you are what you are? Do you know those lines of Shakespeare’s about Tarquin —

Besides, his soul’s fair temple is defaced;
To whose weak ruins muster troops of cares,
To ask the spotted princess how she fares—?

“Oh, hang your preaching!” cried Forgue, and turned away.

“My lord,” said Donal, if you will not hear me, there are preachers you must hear.”

“They must not be quite so long-winded then!” Forgue answered, speaking as he went, without turning his head.

“You are right,” said Donal; “they will not have much to say, but they may neither be more welcome nor more brief.”

All Forgue’s thoughts were now occupied with the question how Eppie and he were to meet without danger of interruption. I do not think he contemplated treachery. I think that at this time of his life he could not have respected himself, little as was required for that, had he been consciously treacherous; but no man who in love yet loves himself most, is safe from becoming a traitor: potentially he is one already: treachery to him who commits it seems only

natural and justifiable self-preservation. The man who can do a vile thing is incapable of seeing it as it is ; and that ought to make us very doubtful of our own judgments of ourselves, especially if they be defensive judgments. Forgue did not suspect himself. Yet he had but just had his passion for the girl revived by the sight of Kennedy with her, and the idea of another man having her as his own ! He never confessed to himself that he had begun to forget her, and had only been roused to fresh desire by the confronting of his past of partial possession with the threatened future of another's marriage with her. If he had stayed away six months, his heart at least would have forgotten her altogether. This may seem hard to believe. Some, perhaps may be inclined to argue that, if he had devotion enough to surmount the vulgarities of her position and manners and ways of thinking, his love could hardly be such as to yield so soon. But Eppie was not vulgar. Many poorer than she are far less vulgar than some of the so-called leaders of society. No doubt the conventionalities of a man like Forgue must naturally have been not unfrequently shocked in familiar intercourse with one like Eppie. But while he was merely flirting with her, they would only amuse him ; and by the time he was nearer being in love with her, he must have got so accustomed to them that the growing passion obscured them altogether, and he never for the time thought of them. There is no doubt that, brought out as his wife, and confronted with the common people of society, while the flower of his passion was fast withering, he must become painfully aware of many things in her which then he would call vul-

garities when perhaps they were only simplicities ; but in the meantime she was no more vulgar to him than a lamb, or a fool or a baby is vulgar, however unfit one or the other of them may be for a Belgravian drawing-room. Yet vulgar, doubtless, he would now have thought and felt her, but for the love that caused him for the time to do her justice. Love is the opener as well as closer of eyes. But men who, having seen, return to their blindness, are of the readiest to say they have had their eyes opened.

For some time there was no change in Eppie's behavior but that she was not so tearful as before. She continued diligent, never grumbled at the hardest work, and seemed desirous of making up for remissness in the past, when in truth she was trying to make up for something else in the present — to atone for something she could not tell, by doing immediate duty with the greater diligence. But by and by she began again to show both in manner and countenance a little of the old pertness, mingled with an uneasiness amounting to something like fear. But these phenomena of her nature were so intermittent and unpronounced as to be manifest only to eyes loving and before familiar with her looks and ways : her grandparents and Donal saw them. It was clear, to the last especially, that the former relations between hêr and Forgue must be resumed. She never went out in the evening, however, except she were sent by her grandfather ; and then she was always home very quickly — anxious, it seemed, to avoid every possible suspicion. She appeared also disinclined to get out during the day except in like fashion, but her grandmother insisted on her having more or less of a walk

every morning, and with apparent reluctance she consented. At such a time of the day, when everybody was about, and all the business of the town going on, what danger could there be? the old woman said to herself.

It was the custom with Donal and Davie to go often into the woods in the fine weather — they called them their observation class-room — to learn what they might of the multitudinous goings on in that one of nature's workshops. There each for himself and the other exercised his individual powers of seeing and noting and putting together — Donal's being the better; for although he knew little about woodland matters, having been accustomed almost exclusively to the meadows, fields, and bare hillsides, yet having had his powers thus cultivated in the open air, he was very keen to observe even new things, and could the better teach perhaps that he was but a learner himself. One day, while they were walking together with open eyes and ears under the thin shade of a fir-thicket, Davie said with a sudden change of subject —

“I wonder if we shall meet Forgue to-day! he gets up early now, and goes out. I know it is neither to fish nor shoot, for he does not take his rod or his gun: so there must be something he has got to watch and find out! Shouldn't you say so, Mr. Grant?”

This set Donal thinking. Eppie was never out at night, or only for a few minutes: in the morning Forgue went out early! But what could he do in the matter? If Eppie would meet him, how could any one help it?

CHAPTER XXIII.

DIFFERENCES.

THINGS went on for a while, and nothing new occurred. Donal seldom met Lady Arctura, and when he did, received from her no encouragement to address her. But he could not help thinking the troubled look had begun to reappear on her face, while in her smile, as they would pass in hall or corridor, glimmered, he thought, an expression almost pathetic—something almost like an appeal, as if she found herself in need of his help, but was not able to ask him for it. And now she was again, and more than ever, in the company of Miss Carmichael. Donal knew this, and so had good cause to fear that the pharisaism of her would-be directress was coming down upon her, not like rain on the mown grass, but like snow on the spring flowers. The impossibility of piercing the lovers of tradition in any vital part, so pachydermatous are they—so utterly incapable of admitting any argument of a spiritual nature—is a sore trial to the old Adam still unslain in lovers of the Truth. At the same time no discipline is more potent in giving patience opportunity for working her perfect work. But it is well such people cannot be reached by argument, and so persuaded of the truth of these things; for so they would but enter the circles of

the faithful to work fresh schisms and breed fresh imposthumes.

Donal prayed to God for Lady Arctura, and waited. The hour was not yet ripe. Every one that is ready the Father brings to Jesus; the disciple is not greater than his master, and must not think to hasten the time, or lead one who is not yet given him to lead. One ought not to be miserable about another as if God had forgotten him—only to pray and be ready. Strange helpers must we be for God, if, thinking to do his work, we act as if he were himself neglecting it! To wait for God, believing it his one design to redeem his creatures, ready to put to the hand the moment his hour strikes, is faith fit for a fellow-worker with him.

But Donal had begun to think that perhaps he had been too forbearing towards the hideous doctrines advocated by Miss Carmichael. It is one thing where evil doctrines are quietly held, and the truth that is associated with them turned into the food of life by good people doing their best with what has been taught them, and quite another thing where they are forced upon some shrinking nature against all its most sacred instincts—some nature rendered weak to resist by the very reverence in which it excels. The finer nature, from very inability to think of another as less pure in intent than itself, is at a great disadvantage in the hands of the coarser. He made up his mind that, risk as it was to enter into disputation with any worshipper of the letter, seeing that for purposes of argument the letter is so much more manageable than the spirit, which

while it lies in the letter unperceived, has no force — the letter-worshipper being incapable of seeing that no utterance of God could possibly mean what he makes out of it — he resolved, I say, notwithstanding this consideration, to hold himself ready, and if anything was given him, to cry aloud, and not spare. Nor had he long resolved ere the opportunity came.

For a place so much unsought as I have represented the old avenue, a rather large proportion of the incidents of my narrative there occurred: it was in a great measure because of its desertion that Donal frequented it, and it was with intent, and in the pride of her confidence in her own acquaintance with scripture, and in her power to use it, that Miss Carmichael on the occasion led her rather unwilling, rather recusant, and very unhappy disciple thitherward, in the hope because of what she had been reporting concerning his words of an encounter with him. Such attacks upon the old-established faith must be met, and such an obnoxious influence frustrated! It was a bright autumn day. The trees had been sorely bereaved, but some foliage hung yet in thin yellow clouds upon their outspread patient boughs. There was plenty of what Davie called *scushlin*, that is making a noise with the feet amongst the thick-lying, withered leaves. But less foliage means more sunlight. Donal was walking along, his book in his hand, now and then reading a little, and now and then looking up to the half-bared branches, crossing and mingling so inextricably over his head, now and then like Davie, sweeping a cloud of the fallen multitude before him. He

was in this childish act when, looking up he saw the two ladies approaching, a few yards in front. But he did not see the peculiar look Miss Carmichael threw her companion — “Behold your prophet!” it said. He would have passed with a lifted bonnet, but Miss Carmichael stopped — with a smile which was bright because it showed her good teeth, but was not pleasant because it showed nothing else.

“Glorying over the fallen, Mr. Grant?” she said. Donal in his turn smiled.

“That is scarcely Mr. Grant’s way?” said Arctura, “— so far at least as I have known him!”

“Poor children!” said Miss Carmichael, feeling or affecting a sympathy with the fallen leaves, and looking down on them compassionately.

“Pardon me,” said Donal, “if I grudge them your pity; it seems to me misplaced. There is nothing more of children in those leaves than there is in the hair that falls on the barber’s floor.”

“I don’t think it very gracious to pull a lady up so sharply,” returned Miss Carmichael. “I spoke poetically.”

“There is no poetry in what is not true,” rejoined Donal. “Those are not the children of the tree.”

“Of course! I know that,” she answered, with properly moderated scorn at being misunderstood; “a tree has no children, but” —

“A tree no children!” repeated Donal. “What then are all those beech-nuts among the fallen leaves! *They* are the children of the tree!”

“Lost like the leaves!” sighed Miss Carmichael, willing to shift her ground.

“Why do you say they are lost? They must fulfil the end for which they were made; and if so —”

“What end were they made for?”

“I do not know; but who can tell what they do for the ground? One thing we know, that, if they were all to grow up beech-trees, they would be a good deal in the way.”

“Then you mean there are more seeds than are required?”

“No, surely; for I do not know what is required of them — or how necessary it may be for the true life of the tree to produce them all.”

“But you must allow that some things are lost!” said Miss Carmichael.

“Yes, surely!” answered Donal; “why else should he have to come and look for them till he find them?”

This was hardly such an answer as the theologian had expected, and she was not immediately ready with her rejoinder.

“But some of them are lost after all!” she said.

“Doubtless,” replied Donal; “some of his sheep run away again. But he goes after again.”

“Does he always?”

“Yes.”

“I do not believe it.”

“Then you do not believe that God is infinite?”

“Yes, I do.”

“How can you? Is he not the Lord God merciful and gracious?”

“I am glad you know that.”

“But if his mercy and his graciousness are not infinite, then is he not infinite.”

“There are other attributes in which he is infinite.”

“But he is not infinite in them all. He is not infinite in those which are the most beautiful, the most divine, the most Christ-like! Just in those he is measurable, bounded, not infinite!”

“I do not care for human argument. I go by the word of God.”

“Let me hear then.”

Now it had so fallen that the two ladies were talking about the doctrine of adoption when they came up to Donal; and so this was the first thing to occur to the champion of orthodoxy.

“There is the doctrine of adoption,” she said; “one of the most precious, if one may say so, in the whole Bible; does not that even teach us that God chooses to make some his children and not others? He adopts some, and leaves the others out. If you say that then he is not infinite in mercy, when the Bible says he is, you are guilty of blasphemy.”

But if Miss Carmichael was a little astonished at what she accounted, after her own reasoning, a denial of the infinitude of God’s mercy, where Donal was only denying that to be infinite which she called infinite, and so asserting the real infinitude, she was very much astonished at what he said next.

In a tone calm even to solemnity, he said —

“God’s mercy is infinite; and the doctrine of adoption is one of the falsest of all the doctrines invented, in its own bitter lack of the spirit whereby we cry *Abba, Father*, by the so-called Church, and used by yet less loving teachers to oppress withal the souls of God’s true children, and scare them from their Father’s arms.”

“I hate sentiment,” said Miss Carmichael.

“You shall have none,” returned Donal. “Tell me what is meant by adoption.”

“The taking of children,” said Miss Carmichael, who was sharp enough already to see a rock ahead, “and treating them as your own.”

“Whose children?” asked Donal.

“Any one’s.”

“Whose, I ask,” repeated Donal, “are the children whom God adopts?”

Here was the rock. Her bark was upon it, and Miss Carmichael was a little staggered. But she pulled up courage and said —

“The children of Satan.”

“But if Satan made them, how are they to be blamed for doing the deeds of their father?”

“You know very well what I mean; Satan did not make them. God made them but they have sinned and fallen.”

“Then did God repudiate them?”

“Well, yes.”

“And they became the children of another?”

“Yes, of Satan, as I said.”

“Then first, God disowns his children, and then when they are the children of another makes them his own again by adoption. Is that like a father? Because his children do not please him, he repudiates them altogether till another takes them up, and then he wants them again — not, however, as his own, but as the children of the other requiring to be adopted to be his! The old relation of their origin has no longer any force, any reality with their very own father!”

“Even you dare not surely say that the wicked are the children of God just the same as the good.”

“That be far from me ! Those who do the will of God are ten times more his children than those who do not ; they are born then of the highest part of the divine nature, of the nature of Jesus Christ, which is obedience. But if they were not in the first place and in the most profound fact the children of God, they could never become his children in that higher, yea, highest sense, by any fiction of adoption. Do you think if the devil could create, his children could ever become the children of God ? But you and I, and the most wretched self-lover ever born, are all the children of God to begin with. That is what makes all the misery and all the hope. Hence we must become his children in heart and soul, or be for ever wretched. If we ceased to be his, if the relations between us were destroyed, which is impossible, then there would be no redemption possible, for there would be nothing left to redeem.”

“You may reason as you please, Mr. Grant, but while Paul teaches the doctrine, I will hold it. He may perhaps know a little better than you.”

“Paul teaches no such doctrine. He teaches just what I have been saying. The word is used for adoption, but the original of it is a placing in the position of a son, and he applies it to the raising of one who is a son to the true position of a son.”

“It seems to me more presumptuous in you than I can say to take on you to determine what the apostle meant.”

“Why, Miss Carmichael, do you think the gospel comes to us as to a set of fools ? Is there any way

of receiving a message other than by first understanding the message? I am bound by the express command of the master to understand the things he says to me. He commands me to see their rectitude, because, they being true, I ought to be able to see them true. In that hope I read my Greek Testament every day. But it is not necessary to know Greek to see what Paul means by adoption. You have only to consider his words with intent to find out his meaning, not to find in them the teaching of this or that community. In the epistle to Galatians, whose child does he speak of as adopted? It is the father's own child, his heir, who differs nothing from a slave until he enters upon his true relation to his father — the full condition of a son. So also in another passage by the same word he means the redemption of the body — our passing into the higher condition of outward things fit for the sons and daughters of God — becoming such in all the grandeur and glory of the relation completed even outwardly — the heavenly condition of things as differing from the earthly. Then we are no more *like* aliens, but like what we are, the children of the house. Any use of a single word Paul says to oppress a human heart with the feeling that it is not by birth, making, origin, or whatever word of closer meaning can be found, the child of God, comes of the devil, the father of evil, and not either of Paul or of Christ. Why, my lady," Donal went on, turning to Arctura, "all the evil lies in this — that he is our father and we are not his children. To fulfil the very necessities of our being we must be his children in brain and heart, in body and soul and spirit, in obedience and hope and gladness and love

— his out and out beyond all that tongue can say, mind think or heart desire. Then only is our creation fulfilled — then only shall we be what we were made for, and make capable of, and what we are troubled on all sides that we may become.”

He ceased. Miss Carmichael was astonished and intellectually cowed, but her heart was nowise touched. She had never had that longing after closest relation with God which sends us feeling after the father. But taking courage under the overshadowing of the wing of the divine Arctura spoke.

“ I do hope what you say is true, Mr. Grant ! ” she sighed.

“ Oh, yes, hope ! we all hope ! But it is the word we have to do with, not hope, ” said Miss Carmichael.

“ I have given you the true word, ” said Donal.

But as if she heard neither of them Arctura went on,

“ If it were but true, ” she moaned, “ it would set right everything on the face of the earth. ”

“ You mean far more than that, my lady ! ” said Donal. “ You mean everything in the human heart, which will to all eternity keep moaning and crying out for the Father until it is in very truth one with its own nearest ; only real relation in the universe or in the scope of the divine imagination itself, which is creation original and potent. All other relations whatever are but the outcome and necessity from the all-embracing relation to Him. ”

Judging his work over, Donal here lifted his bonnet, and would have passed on.

“ One word, Mr. Grant, ” said Miss Carmichael.

Donal stopped.

“It is but fair to warn you,” she said, “that no man holding such doctrines can honestly desire to become a clergyman of the Church of Scotland.”

“The worse for the Church of Scotland!” said Donal, laughing; “but as I do not desire to hold relation with it or any other Church, except that of love to every member of the one only real Church, you need have no anxiety lest I should use its organization for the spread of the truth—for the truth of God, that which I have spoken I believe with my whole soul to be.”

“Thank you from my heart, Mr. Grant!” said Lady Arctura, as again he took his leave of them.

When he was gone, the ladies resumed their walk in silence. At length Miss Carmichael spoke, and thus:

“Well, I must say, of all the conceited young men I have had the misfortune to meet, your Mr. Grant is the first in self-assurance and forwardness.”

“Are you sure, Sophia,” rejoined Arctura, “that it is self-assurance, and not conviction of the truth of what he has to say, that gives him the courage to speak as he does?”

“How can it be when it is not true?—when it goes against all that has for ages been taught and believed?”

“What if God should now be sending fresh light into the minds of His people?”

“The old is good enough for me.”

“But it may not be good enough for God! What if Mr. Grant should be his messenger to us!”

“A likely thing, indeed! A mere student from the North, raw from college!”

“No matter! I cannot help a profound hope that he may be in the right after all. Was not that the way they spoke in the old time, when they said, ‘Can any good thing come out of Galilee?’”

“Ah, I see the influence has gone farther with you than I had hoped! You are infected not merely with his doctrine, but with his frightful irreverence! To dare the comparison of that poor creature with Jesus Christ!”

“If he were a messenger of Jesus Christ,” said Arctura, quietly — “I neither say he is or he is not — but the reception you now give him would be precisely what he would expect, for the Lord said the disciple should be as his master!”

The words entered and stung. Miss Carmichael stopped short, her face in a flame, but her words were cold and hard.

“I am sorry,” she said, “our friendship should come to so abrupt a conclusion, Lady Arctura; but it is time it should end when you can speak so to me, who have for so many years done my best to help you! If that is the first result of your new gospel — well! Remember who said, ‘If an angel from heaven preach any other gospel to you than I have preached, let him be accursed!’”

She turned back to go again down the avenue.

“O, Sophia! do not leave me so,” cried Lady Arctura.

But Sophia was already yards away, her skirt making a small whirlwind that went following her among the withered leaves. Arctura burst into tears, and sat down at the root of one of the great beeches. Miss Carmichael never looked behind her, but went

straight home. She met Donal again in the avenue, for he, too, had turned. Once more he uncovered his head, but she took no notice of him. She had done with him — probably to all eternity! Those horrible new views! Her poor Arctura!

Donal, walking quietly back with his book, on which, however, he now looked more than he read, trying with but partial success to dismiss the thought of what had occurred, when a little fluffy fringe of one of poor Lady Arctura's sobs reached his ear. He looked up and saw her sitting like one rejected, weeping. He could not pass and leave her thus! But he approached her slowly, that she might have time to get over the worst of her passion. She heard his steps in the withered leaves, glanced up, saw who it was, buried her face for one moment in her hands, then sought her handkerchief, raised her head, and rose with a feeble attempt at a smile. Donal saw and understood the smiles. She would not have him feel any compunction as the cause of what had taken place.

"Mr. Grant," she said, coming towards him, "St. Paul said that should an angel from heaven preach any other gospel than his, he was accursed. 'Let him be accursed,' he said. Even an angel from heaven, you see, Mr. Grant! It is terrible!"

"It is terrible, and I say amen to it with all my heart," replied Donal. "But the gospel you have received is not the gospel of Paul, but one substituted for it — by no angel from heaven, neither with any design of substitution, but by men with hide-bound souls, who in order to get them into their own intellectual pockets, melted down the gold of the

kingdom and recast it in the moulds of wretched legal thought, learned of the Romans, who crucified their Master. Grand childlike heavenly things they would explain by vulgar worldly notions of law and right ! But they meant well, seeking to justify the ways of God to men, therefore the curse of the apostle does not fall I think upon them. They sought a way out of their difficulties, and thought they had found one, when in reality it was their faith that carried them over the top of their enclosing walls. But gladly would I see discomfited such as taking their inventions at the hundreth hand, and moved by none of the fervor of those who first promulgated the doctrines, lay them as the word and will of God — lumps of iron and heaps of dust — upon the live, beating, longing hearts that cry out after their God — vanished afresh in the clouds these have raised around the Master, the express image of the Father's person."

"Oh, I do hope what you say is true!" panted Arctura. "I think I shall die if I find it is not!"

"You can find nothing but what the Lord teaches you. If you find what I tell you untrue, it will be in not being enough — in not being grand and free and bounteous enough. To think anything too good to be true is to deny God — to say the untrue is better than the true — to commit the sin against the Holy Ghost. It will be something better and better, lovelier and lovelier that Christ will teach you. Only you must leave human teachers altogether, and give yourself to Him to be taught. If there is any truth in these things, then Christ is in the world now as then, and within our call."

"I will try to do as you tell me," said Arctura.

“If there is anything that troubles you,” said Donal, as he took it, “I shall be most glad to try and help you; but it is better there should not be much talk. The thing lies between you and the living light.”

With these words he left her. Arctura followed slowly to the house, and went straight to her own room, her mind filling as she went with slow reviving strength and a great hope. No doubt there came some of her relief in the departure of her incubus friend; but that would have soon vanished in fresh sorrow, but for the hope and strength to which this departure yielded the room to spring up in her heart. By the time she saw her again she trusted she would be more firmly grounded in her ideas concerning many things, and would be able to set them forth aright. She was not yet free of the notion that you must be able to argue in defence of your convictions: that you are hardly at liberty to say you believe a thing so long as any one is able to bring up an argument against it, which you only see and cannot show to be false. Alas for us if our beliefs went no farther than experience or logic, or an embracing understanding even of the beliefs themselves could justify them! Alas for our beliefs, if they are not what we shape our lives, our actions, our aspirations, our hopes, our repentances by!

Donal was glad indeed to think that now at length an open door stood before the poor girl. He had been growing much interested in her, as one on whom life lay heavy, one who seemed ripe for the kingdom of heaven, in whose way stood one who would neither enter herself, nor allow to enter her that would. She

was indeed fit for nothing but the kingdom of heaven, so much was she already the child of him whom hitherto she had longed after, not daring to call him her father. But his regard for her was entirely that of the gentle strong toward the weak he would fain help. He had been doubtless gratified by the confidence she placed in him now and then, but, possibly, if he had cared more for her, he might have taken less good-humored pains to satisfy her in the matter of the authorship; about this I am not sure. But now that he could hope of her that she was fairly started on the path of life, namely, towards the knowledge of him who is the life, he felt his care over her grow more tender, though still and always that of the stronger whose part it is, divinely ordered, to serve the weak, to minister of that whereby the weak may grow strong. Few men could be more aware than he that the presence of the purest personal ends must cast doubt upon the best teaching. Whoever speaks from himself must be a liar. Therefore he never sought opportunities of what is called doing good; he always waited till such were given him. In telling this, I judge no one; I merely narrate. And I beg my reader to remember there is an active as well as a passive waiting. But when he saw that a word was required of him, who more ready than he, for his hour was then come.

After this, he rather than otherwise avoided meeting Lady Arctura — certainly, at least, he did not seek her. Whether she at all sought him, I can hardly say; I think not; I am sure only that for a good many days they did not so much as see each other.

The health of the earl was as usual fluctuating. It

depended much on the nature of his special indulgences. There was hardly any sort of narcotic with which he did not at least make experiment, if not in which he did not indulge. In so doing he made no pretence even to himself of experiment for the furtherance of knowledge; he knew that he wanted solely and merely to find how this or that, thus or thus modified or combined, would affect himself and contribute to his living a life such as he would have it, and plainly other than that ordered for him by a power which least of all powers he chose to acknowledge: the power of drugs he was eager to understand; the power of the living source of him and them he would scarcely recognize. This came of no hostility to religion other than the worst hostility of all, that of a life inconsistent with any acknowledgement of supernal claim. He believed neither like saint nor devil; he believed and did not obey; he believed and did not *yet* tremble.

The one day he was better, the other worse. I say, according to the character and degree of his indulgence. At one time it greatly affected his temper, taking from him all mastery of himself; at another made him so dull and stupid, that he resented nothing except any attempt to rouse him from his habitude. But the worst influence of all was a constant one — yet one of which, if he was at all for the present conscious, he was yet entirely regardless. However the different things might vary in their operations upon him, to one end at least they all tended, and that was the destruction of whatever remained to him of a moral nature.

Moved all his life by rebellion against what he

called the conventionalities of society, he had committed great wrongs — whether also what are called crimes, I cannot tell : no repentance had followed, whatever remorse the consequences of them may have occasioned. Even the possibility of remorse was gradually disappearing from his nature. But so long as nothing occurs causing the possible to embody itself in the actual, such a man may live honored, and die respected, although in truth he belongs rather to the kind demoniacal than the kind human. There remains, however, always the danger of his real nature, or rather unnature breaking out in this way or that demoniacal.

Although he went so little out of the house, and apparently never beyond the grounds, he yet learned a good deal at times of thing going on in the neighborhood. Davie brought him news; so did Simmons; and now and then he would have an interview with his half-acknowledged relative at the home farm, for years not a few the faithful agent of the family in what concerned the land and its tenancies.

One morning before the earl was up, he sent for Donal, and requested him to give Davie half-holiday, and do something for him instead.

“ You know, or perhaps you don’t know,” he said, “ that I have a house in the town — the only house, indeed, now belonging to the title — a strange and not very attractive house; you must have noticed it — on the main street, a little before you come to the Morven Arms.”

“ I believe I know the house, my lord,” answered Donal — “ with strong iron stanchions to the lower windows, and ” —

“Yes, that is the house ; I see you know it ; and I daresay you know the story of it — how it came to be deserted as it now is ! That was more than a hundred years ago ! But I have spent some nights in it since myself notwithstanding.”

“I should like to hear the story, my lord,” said Donal.

His lordship eyed him as if he doubted him ; then, apparently satisfied, went on.

“Well,” he said, “you may as well have the story from myself as from another. Happily it does not come near any one living. The family was not then represented by the same branch as now, else I might perhaps be thin-skinned about it. This is no legend, mind you : it is a simple and very dreadful fact, and led to the abandonment of the house. I think myself, however, it is nearly time it should be so far forgotten that at least the house should let. It might by this time be considered as purified ! The castle and the title had not then parted company ; that is a tale worth telling too ! there was no fair play in that either ! but I will not trouble you with it now. One at a time is enough.

“Into the generation then above ground, by one of those freaks of nature specially strange, and yet more inexplicable than the rest, had been born an original savage. Mark me — just as the old type, upon which ever so many modifications have been wrought, will yet sometimes reappear in the midst of the newest edition, so it was now ; I speak in no figure of speech when I say that the apparition, the phenomenon, was a savage. I do not mean too that he was an exceptional rough man for his position, but for any position

in the Scotland of that age. No doubt he was regarded as a madman, and used as a madman ; but my opinion is the more philosophical — namely, that just as a fool has in our day been born with three feet to one leg, like his ancestors of the old marshy time, when but for those three feet to a leg the ground would have swallowed up the race, so here, by an arrest of development, into the middle of ladies and gentlemen came a veritable savage, their brother, and that out of no darkest age of history, but from beyond all history, out of the awful prehistoric times.”

Here his lordship visibly and involuntarily shuddered, as from the memory of something he had actually seen, and Donal concluded that into that region too he had wandered in some one or perhaps many of his visions.

“ He was a fierce and furious savage,” he went on, — “ worse than anything you can imagine. The only sign of the influence of civilization upon him was that for the moment he was cowed by the eye of the man who acted as his keeper. Never, except by the rarest chance, was he left alone and not asleep : experience had proved that no one could tell what he might not do.

“ He was of gigantic size, with coarse black hair — the brawniest fellow and the ugliest, they say : for you may suppose my description is legendary : there is no portrait of him on any of our walls ! — with a huge, shapeless, cruel, greedy mouth.” As his lordship said the words, Donal, with involuntary insight, saw both cruelty and greed in the mouth that spoke, though it was neither huge nor shapeless — “ lips hideously red and large, with the whitest teeth inside

them. I give you the description thus minute," said his lordship, who evidently lingered with pleasure on the details of his recital, "just as I used to hear it from the mouth of an old nurse who had been all her life in the family, and had had it from her mother who was in the family at the time. His great passion, his keenest delight, was animal food. He ate enormously — more, they said, than two of the heartiest men could have eaten. And to eat he was ready at any and every hour of the day, except that in which he had just gorged himself. Roast flesh was his main delight, but he was very fond of broth also. He must have been more like Mrs. Shelley's *Frankenstein* than any other of fact or fancy! All the time that, as quite a young man, I was reading the story, I had the vision of my far-off cousin constantly before me, as I had seen him in my mind's eye while my nurse described him, and I kept wondering whether Mrs. Shelley could ever have heard the same description of him. As the creature was unfit for any kind of society whatever — in an earlier age they would have got rid of him by readier and more thorough means, if only for shame of having brought such a being into the world — they sent him with his keeper, a little man with a powerful eye, to the house of which I speak; for away in an altogether solitary place they could not persuade any man to live with him. At night he was always secured to the bed when he slept, otherwise his keeper could never have felt secure enough to sleep at all, for he was as cunning as he was hideous. When he slept during the day, which he did frequently after a meal, his attendant would content himself with locking his door, and keeping his ears awake. At

such times he would step just outside the street door, to look on the world, and exchange what words he might with any one who happened to be passing; he would neither leave the door, nor shut it behind him, lest the savage should perhaps escape from his room and bar it, and then set the house on fire.

“One beautiful Sunday morning, the brute, after a good breakfast, had fallen asleep on his bed, and the keeper had gone down-stairs, and was standing in the street with the door open immediately behind him. It was Sunday morning, all the people were at church, and the street was empty as a desert. He had stood there for some time, enjoying the sweet air and the scent of the flowers, then went in and got a light to his pipe, put coals on the fire, and saw that the huge cauldron of broth which the cook had left in his charge when he went to church — it was to serve for dinner and supper both, was boiling beautifully, then went back, and again took his station in front of the open door. Presently came a neighbor woman from her house, leading by the hand a little girl too young to go to church. The woman and he stood talking for some time. Suddenly cried the woman,

“‘Good Lord! what’s come o’ the bairn?’ The same instant came one piercing shriek to their ears — from some distance it seemed. The mother darted down the neighboring close. But the keeper, then first discovering that the door behind him was shut, was filled with horrible dismay. He hurried to another entrance in the close, of which he always kept the key about him, and entering went straight to the kitchen. There by the fire stood the savage, gazing with a fixed fishy rapture at the cauldron, which the steam, issuing

in little sharp jets from under the lid, showed to be boiling furiously, with grand prophecy of broth. With a ghastly horror creeping through his very bones, the keeper hastily lifted the lid — and there, with the broth bubbling in waves over it, lay the body of the child! The demon had torn off her frock, and thrust her, into the boiling cauldron!

“Not a whit was the monster ashamed of his deed! There rose such an outcry that the family was compelled to put him in chains and carry him to some place unknown where he lived to old age, nurse said. And ever since then the house has been uninhabited, with, of course, the reputation of being haunted. If you happen to be in its neighborhood when it begins to grow dark, you will see the children hurrying past it in silence from the playground near, now and then glancing back in dread lest the creature should have opened the never-opened door, and be stealing after them. They are afraid of the *Red Etin*, as they call him — only this ogre was black, I am sorry to say: red would have been the better color for him.”

“It is indeed a horrible story,” said Donal.

“It is there I want you to go for me; you don’t mind it, do you?”

“Not in the least,” answered Donal.

“I want you to search a certain bureau there for some papers.”

“You would like me to go at once?”

“Yes.”

“Very well, my lord,” said Donal.

“By the way,” said the earl, as if he had but just thought of the thing, “have you no news to give me about Forgue’s affair?”

“No, my lord,” answered Donal. “Whether they meet now I do not know, but I am afraid.”

“Oh, I daresay,” rejoined his lordship, “like many another, the whim is wearing off! One pellet drives out another, and with the conviction behind it in the popgun that it would be simple ruin — eh, Mr. Grant? But we Graemes are stiff-necked in our ways both with God and man, and I don’t trust him much.”

“He gave you no promise, if you remember, my lord.”

“I remember very well; why the deuce should I not remember? I am not in the way of forgetting things! No, by God! nor forgiving them either! Where there is anything to forgive there is no fear of my forgetting! I remember that I may *not* forgive.”

He followed this inhuman utterance with a laugh, as if he would have it pass for a joke, but there was no ring in the laugh.

He then gave Donal detailed instructions as to where the bureau stood, how he was to open it with a curious key he made him find for himself in one of the drawers in the room, how also he was to open the more secret part of the bureau in which the papers lay.

“Forget!” he echoed, returning to his last utterance; “I have not been in that house for twenty years! you can judge whether I forget! No!” he added with an oath, “if I found myself forgetting I should think it time to look out; but there is no sign of that yet, thank God! There! take the keys, and be off with you! Simmons will give you the key of the house. You had better take that of the door in the close: it is easier to open.”

Donal went away wondering at the pleasure the earl had seemed to take in the details of his horrible story — worse they were than I have cared to record — especially in describing how the mother took the body of her child out of the pot.

He went at once to Simmons and asked him for the key of the side door, which opened in the close. The butler went to fetch it, but returned saying he could not lay his hands upon it, but there was the key of the front door, which, however, he was afraid might prove rather stiff to turn. Donal taking what he could get, and oiling it well, set out for Morven House. But on his way he turned aside into the humble dwelling in which he had spent so many hours with one who had loved the truth of things with his whole heart.

Andrew seemed so much worse that he thought he must be sinking. So apparently thought Andrew, for the moment he saw Donal he requested they might be left alone for a few minutes. “My yoong freen,” he said, “the Lord has fauored me greatly in grantin’ my last days the licht o’ your coontenance. I hae learnt a heap o’ things frae ye ’at I kenna hoo I could hae come at wantin’ ye.”

“Eh, An’rew!” interrupted Donal, “I dinna weel ken hoo that can be, for it aye seemt to me ye had a’ the knowledge ’at was gaein’!”

“Weel, that man can ill taich wha’s no gaein’ on to learn; an’ maybe whiles he learns mair frae the man ’at he teaches nor that man learns frae him. But it’s a’ frae the Lord — for the Lord is that speerit — the speerit o’ a’ won’erfu’ an’ gran’ things; an’ that ’cause first o’ a’ he’s the speerit o’ obedience to the high

will o' richt an' trowth. But, my son, maybe it may comfort ye a wee in some o' the troubles the Lord may hae for ye i' the time to come, to reflec' that the auld cobbler, Anerew Comin, gaed intil the new warl, fitter company for them that was there afore him, for the help 'at ye gied him afore he gaed. An' may the Lord mak a sicht o' use o' ye for that same! Fowk say a heap aboot savin' sowls; but ower aften, whan they think they hae savit them, it seems to me they hae but taen frae them the sense that they're sair in want o' savin'. I wad hae a man ken in himsel' mair an' mair the need o' bein' saved, til he cries oot an' shouts, 'I *am* saved, for there's nane in H'aven but thee, and there's nane upo' the earth I desire beside thee! for lika man, wuman, child, an' live cratur, is to me but as a portion o' thee, whaur on to lat rin ower the love that *will* aye be raisin' in him lik a f'untain!' Whan a man can say that, he's saved, but no till than, though he may hae been lang years upo' the ro'd, an' aye comin' nearer to that goal o' a houp, the hert o' the father o' me, an' you, an' Doory, an' Eppie, an' a' the nations o' the earth!"

He stopped weary, but his eyes, fixed on Donal, went on where his voice had ended, and for a time Donal seemed to hear what his soul was saying, and to hearken with content. But suddenly their light went out, he gave a sigh, and said —

"It's ower for this warl, my freen. It's comin' — the hoor o' darkness. But the thing 'at's true whan the licht shines is jist as true i' the dark; ye canna work, that's a'. God 'ill gie me grace to lie still. It's a' ane. I wad lie jist as I used to sit, i' the days whan I men't fowk's shune and Doory happent to

tak awa' the licht for a moment — I wad sit aye luikin' doon throw the mirk at my wark, though I couldna see a stime o't, wi' the alsion (*aw'l*) i' my han', ready, aye ready to put in the neist steek the moment the licht fell upon the spot whaur it was to gang. I wad lie like that whan I'm deein', just waitin' for the licht, an' making' an incense-offerin' o' my patience whan I hae naething ither, naither thought nor gladness nor sorrow, naething but patience burnin' in pain to offer. He'll accep' that. For, my son, the Maister's jist as easy to please as he's ill to satisfee. Ye hae seen a mither ower her wee lassie's sampler? She'll praise an' praise an' be richt pleest wi't; but wow, gien she was to be content wi' the thing in her han! That lassie's man, whan she cam to ha'e ane, wad hae an ill time o't wi' his hose an' sarks! An' noo I hae a fauvor to beg o' ye, no' for my sake but for her's. Gin ye hae the warnin', ye'll be wi' me when I gang? It may be a comfort to me — I dinna ken — nane can tell 'at hasna dee'd afore; nor even than, for deiths are sae different. Doobtless Lazarus's twa deiths war far frae alike. But it'll be a great comfort to Doory. She winna find hersel' sae lanesome like, losin' sicht o' her auld man, gin the freen o' his hert be aside her when he gangs."

"Please God, I'll be at yer command," said Donal.

"Noo cry upo' Doory to come, for I wadna see less o' her nor I may. It may be years afore I get a sicht o' her lo'in' face again. But the same Lord's in her an' me, an we canna far be sun'ert, however lang the time may be afore we meet again."

Donal obeyed, called Doory, and took his leave.

Opposite Morven House was a building which had

at one time been the stables to it, but was now part of a brewery, and a high wall shut it off from the street. It was now dinner-time with the humble people of the town, and there was not a soul visible in the street; so Donal put the key in the lock of the front door, opened it, and entered without, so far as he knew, a soul having seen him. So far successful, for he desired to rouse no idle curiosity, which might have led crowding feet to the ill-haunted dwelling, he moved almost on tiptoe as he entered the deserted place. He was in a lofty hall, rising high above the first story. The dust lay thick on a large marble table in it — but what was that? — a streak all across it, brushed sharply through the middle of the dust! It was strange! but he could not wait to speculate now! He must do his work first! and proceeded therefore to find the room to which the earl had directed. It was on the first floor, and had at one time been made some quiet use of by the present earl when a comparatively young man. He ascended therefore, the great black oak staircase, which went up and along the sides of the hall. The house had never been dismantled, although things had at different times been taken out of it; and when Donal opened a bit of shutter toward the street, he saw a good-sized room, with tables and chairs and cabinets inlaid with silver and ivory. It looked stately and comfortable, but everything was deep in dust, the curtains and carpet were thick with the deserted sepulchres of moths, and the air somehow suggested a tomb — so that Donal thought at once of the tombs of the kings of Egypt, which, before ravaging conquerors broke into and spoiled them, were filled with such gorgeous

furniture as great kings could desire for the souls destined to return and reanimate the bodies so carefully spiced and stored in cerements and coffins, ready to welcome their return, when the great kings would be themselves again, with the added wisdom of the dead and judged. Conscious of a curious timidity, a kind of awesomeness about every form in the place, he hastened, but softly, to the bureau, applied its key, and following carefully the directions given him, for the lock was an Italian one and had more than one quip and crank and wanton wile about it, succeeded in opening it. His instructions had been so complete that he had no difficulty in finding the secret place, nor the packet which was concealed in it. But just as he laid his hands upon it, he was suddenly aware of a swift passage along the floor without, and past the door of the room, and apparently up the next stair. There was nothing he could distinguish as footsteps, or even as the rustle of a dress, only the ghostly-like motion that could not be described. He darted to the door, which he had only by instinct shut behind him, and opened it swiftly and noiselessly. Nothing was to be seen! But it need be no ghost. The stairs were covered with thick carpet, and a light foot might have passed and gone up without any sound at all but for the haste. It was but the wind of the troubled air that had told the tale.

He turned and closed the bureau, leaving the packet where it lay. If there was any one in the house, who could tell what might follow! It was in truth the merest ghost of a sound he had heard; but he would go after it! Some one might be using the earl's house for his own purposes! He must find out!

Going softly up, he paused at the top, and looked around him. An iron-clenched door stood nearly opposite the head of the stair; and at the father end of the long passage a door stood a little way open. From that direction came the sound of a little movement and then of low voices — one surely that of a woman! Then it flashed upon him that this might be the place of Eppie's rendezvous with Forgee. Afraid of being discovered before he had gathered his wits to bear on the subject, he stepped softly across the passage to the strong door opposite, opened it, not however without some noise, and stepped in, standing for a moment in dread of having thus given an alarm.

It was the strangest looking chamber into which he had stepped — doubtless, he concluded, that occupied by the ogre! Even in the bewilderment of the moment, the tale he had heard in the morning was so present to his mind that he could not help casting his eyes round, and noting several things to confirm the conclusion. But the next instant came from below what sounded like a thundering knock at the street-door — a single knock, loud and fierce. I may mention here that no one ever discovered what that knock was. The inmates of any other house in the town would have taken it merely for a runaway's knock. It was hardly like that of the knocker on the door. That Donal tried, for he long puzzled over it; but he never could satisfy himself concerning it. The start it gave him set his heart shaking in his bosom.

There came a cry along the passage, and the door at the end opened. A hurried step came along, passed Donal, and went down the stair.

“If I am right, now is my time,” said Donal to himself, “Eppie is left alone.”

He issued from his retreat, and went along the passage. The door at the end of it was half-open, and Eppie stood in the gap. Whether she had seen him come out of the ogre’s room, or whether indeed she knew what the room was, I do not know, but she stood gazing with widespread eyes of terror, as if looking on the approach of the Red Etin himself. As he came nearer the blue eyes opened wider, and seemed to fix in their orbits. Just as her name was on his lips, Eppie dropped with a moan on the floor. Donal caught her up — he was equal to a good deal more than the weight of a girl like Eppie — and hurried down. He had but reached the first floor when he heard the sound of swift ascending steps, and the next moment was face to face with Forgeue. The latter started back, and for a moment stood staring. But mounting rage restored him to his self-possession. His first thought had been like that of Ahab — “Hast thou found me, O mine enemy?” But his first words were :

“Put her down, you scoundrel !”

“She can’t stand,” replied Donal quietly.

“You’ve killed her, you damned sneaking spy !”

“Then I should have been more kind than you !”

“What are you going to do with her ?”

“Take her home to her dying grandfather.”

“You’ve hurt her, you devil ! I know you have !”

“She is only frightened. She is coming to herself already. I feel her coming awake.”

“You feel her !” cried Forgeue with a great oath ;
“I will make you feel me presently. Put her down,

I say!" He hissed the words from between his teeth, for he dared not speak aloud for fear of rousing the neighborhood.

Eppie began to writhe and struggle in Donal's arms. Forgue laid hold of her, and Donal was compelled to put her down. She threw herself into the arms of her lover, and was on the point of fainting away again for joy at her deliverance.

"Go out of the house, you spy!" said Forgue.

"I am here by your father's desire," said Donal.

"As a spy," insisted Forgue.

"Not to my knowledge," returned Donal. "He sent me to look for some papers."

"You lie!" said Forgue; "I see it in your face."

"So long as I speak the truth," said Donal, "it matters little to me that you should think me a liar. But, my lord, I request that you will give Eppie up to me, that I may take her home to her people."

"A likely thing!" said Forgue, straining Eppie to him, and looking with contempt at Donal.

"Then I tell you, on the word of a man whom neither you nor the world shall find a liar, that I will rouse the town, and have a crowd about the house in five minutes."

"You are the devil, I do believe, come from hell for my ruin!" cried Forgue. "There! take her. Only mind it is you, and not I to blame that I do not marry her! I would have done my part. Leave us alone and I'll marry her; take her from me in this sneaking fashion, and I make no promises!"

"Oh, but you will, dearest?" said Eppie in a beseeching, frightened tone.

Forgue pushed her from him. She burst into

tears. He took her in his arms and began soothing her like a child, assuring her he meant nothing by what he had said.

“You are my own little wife,” he went on, “you know you are, whatever your enemies may drive us to. Nothing can part us now. Go with him for the present. The time will come when the truth shall be known, and we will laugh at them all. If it were not for your sake and the scandal of the thing, I should send the villain to the bottom of the stair in double quick time. But it is better to be patient.”

Sobbing bitterly, Eppie went with Donal down the stair, leaving Forgue shaking with impotent rage behind him. When they got into the street Donal turned to lock the door. Eppie seized the opportunity, darted from him, and ran down the close to the side door. But it was locked, and she could not get in. Then came a sudden thought to Donal. He was with her in a moment.

“You go home alone, Eppie,” he said; “it will be just as well you should not go in with me. I am going to see Lord Forgue out of this.”

“Eh, ye winna hurt him!” pleaded Eppie.

“I will not if I can help it; but he may put it out of my power to spare him. I don’t want to hurt him; there is no revenge in me. You go home. It will be better for him as well as for you.”

She went slowly away, weeping, but trying to keep what appearance of calm she might. As soon as she was round the corner, Donal hurried back to the front door, and hastening to the side door took the key from the lock. Then returning to the hall, he summoned Forgue.

“My lord,” he said at the bottom of the stair, loud enough to be heard through the empty house, “I have got both the keys; the side door is locked, and I am about to lock the front door. I do not want to shut you in. Pray come down before I go.” Forgue came leaping down the stair, and threw himself upon Donal. A fierce struggle for the possession of the key which Donal held in his hand commenced. The sudden assault staggered Donal, and he fell on the floor with Forgue above him, who immediately laid hold of the key, and tried to wrest it from him. But Donal was much the stronger of the two, and had soon thrown his lordship off him. For a moment he was a little tempted to give him a good thrashing, but the thought of Eppie helped him to restrain himself, and he would not let him up, but contented himself with holding him down till he yielded. For a while he kept kicking and striking out in all directions, but at last lay still.

“Will you promise to walk out quietly if I let you up?” said Donal, still holding him down. “If you will not, I will drag you out into the street by the legs.”

“I will,” said Forgue; and getting up walked out and away without another word.

Donal locked the door, and, forgetting all about the papers, went back to Andrew’s. There was Eppie busy in the outer room, and for the present he was satisfied. She kept her back to him, and he took care not to address her. With a word or two to the grandmother, and a hint to keep the girl in the house as much as possible, reminding

her that she might have no other to send for him if her husband should want him, he took his leave, and went home, revolving all the way one question after another as to what he ought to do or could do. Should he tell the father how the son was carrying himself, or should he not? Had the father been a man of rectitude, or even so far such as to dread the doing more than the suffering of evil, he would not have hesitated a moment; but knowing he did not care one pin what became of Eppie, so long as his son was prevented from marrying her, he did not feel bound by the mere fact that he was tutor to the younger son, without the smallest responsibility for the other, to carry the evil report of the elder. The father might have a right to know, but had he a right to know from him? A noble nature finds it impossible to deal with questions except on the highest grounds: where those grounds are unrecognized, the relations of responsibility may be difficult indeed to determine. All he was able to conclude on his way, and he did not hurry, was—that if he were asked any questions, he would speak out what he knew—be absolutely open. If that should put a weapon in the hand of the enemy, a weapon was not the victory.

Scarcely had he entered the castle, where his return had been watched for, when Simmons came to him with a message that his lordship wanted to see him. Then first Donal remembered that he had not brought the papers! Had he not been sent for, he would have gone back at once to fetch them. As it was he must see the earl first.

He found him in a worse condition than usual.

His last drug or mixture had not agreed with him, or he had taken too much, and the reaction was correspondent: anyhow, he was in a vile temper. Donal told him at once he had been to the house, and had found the papers, but had not brought them — had, in fact, forgotten them.

“A pretty fellow you are!” cried the earl. “What, you have left those papers lying about where any rascal may find them and play the deuce with the history of my house!”

Donal tried to assure him that they were perfectly safe, under the same locks and keys in fact as before, but the earl, having mistaken something he said, and having had it explained, broke out upon him afresh, as one always going about the bush, and never coming to the point.

“How the devil was it you locked them up again and did not bring them with you?” he asked.

Then Donal told him he had heard a noise in the house. As much of the story, in fact, as his lordship permitted; for straightway he fell out upon him again for meddling with things which did not belong to him. What had he to do with his son's pleasures? Things of the sort were much better taken no notice of, especially within the household. At the castle the linen had to be washed as elsewhere, but it was not done in the great court! His son was a youth of position, who must not be balked in his fancies! They might otherwise take a wrong turn to the detriment of society!

Donal took advantage of a pause to ask whether he might not go back directly and bring the papers. He would run all the way he said.

“No, damn you,” answered the earl. “Give me the keys — all the keys — house keys and all. I will never trust such a fool again with anything.”

At this juncture, and just as Donal had laid the keys on his lordship’s table — he was still in bed — Simmons appeared, saying that Lord Forgue desired to know if his father would see him.

“Oh, yes! send him up,” cried the earl in a fury. “Let me have all the devils in hell at once. I may as well swallow all the blasted sulphur at once!”

There is no logic to be looked for where a man is talking out of a deeper discomfort than the matter in hand. His lordship’s rages had to do with abysses of misery no man knew but himself.

“You go into the next room, Grant,” he said, when Simmons was gone, “and wait there till I call you.”

Donal retired, sat down, took a book from the table and tried to read. He heard the door open and close again, and then the sounds of their two voices. By degrees they grew louder, and at length the earl roared out, but so wildly and incoherently that Donal caught only a word here and there.

“I’ll be damned soul and body in hell, but I’ll put a stop to this! Why, you son of a snake, I have but to speak the word, and you are — well, what? — Yes, but I hold my tongue for the present. By God! I have held it too long already, though — letting you grow up the most damnably ungrateful dog that ever snuffed carrion, while I was perilling my soul for you, you rascal!”

“What have you to give me, my lord, but the title!” said Forgue coolly. “Thank heaven, that

you cannot take from me, however good your will may be, my country will see to that."

"Damn you and your country! You have no more right to the title than the beggarly kitchen maid you have married. If you but knew yourself you would crow in another fashion."

Up to this last sentence Donal, I say, had heard only a word here and there, and had set all he did hear down to his lordship's fierce scolding folly of rage; but now it was time he should speak. He opened the door.

"I must warn your lordship," he said, "that if you speak so loud, I shall hear every word you say."

"Hear and be damned to you! That fellow there — you see him standing there — the mushroom that he is! Good God! How I loved his mother! and this is the way he serves me! But there was a Providence in the whole affair! It has all come out right! Small occasion had I to be breaking my heart and conscience over it ever since she left me! Hang the pinchbeck rascal! He's no more Forgue than you are, Grant, and never will be Morven if he live a hundred years! He's not one whit better than any bastard in the street! His mother was the loveliest woman ever breathed! — and loved me — ah! God! It is something after all to have been loved so — and by such a woman! A woman, by God! ready and willing and happy to give up — everything for me! *Everything*, do you hear, you damned rascal? I was never married to her! Do you hear, Mr. Grant? I take you to witness my words: She, that fellow's mother and I were never married — not by any law, Scotch, or French, or Dutch, what you will! He's a

damned bastard, and may go about his business when he pleases. Oh, yes! Pray do! Go and marry your scullion when you please! You are your own master—very much indeed your own master—free as the wind that blows to go where you will, and do what you please! I wash my hands of you. *You'll do as you please!* Pray do; it is nothing, and a good deal less than nothing to me! I tell you once for all, the moment I know for certain that you are married to that girl, that very moment I publish to the world—that is, I acquaint certain gossips with the fact I have just told you, and the next Lord Morven will have to be hunted for like a truffle—Ha! ha! ha!”

He burst into a fiendish fit of laughter, and fell back on his pillow, dark with rage and the unutterable fury that made of his whole being a moral volcano. The two men had been standing as if struck dumb, Donal truly sorry for him upon whom this phial of devilish wrath had been emptied, and the other white and trembling with dismay. An abject creature he looked, crushed by his cruel parent. When his father ceased, unable from the reaction of his rage to go on, he still stood speechless and as if all power to move or speak were gone from him. A moment and he turned whiter still, uttered a groan, and wavered. Donal caught and supported him to a chair, where he leaned back with the perspiration streaming down his face. Donal thought what a pity it was that one capable of such emotion in a matter concerning his worldly position and regard should be apparently so indifferent to what alone can in reality affect a man—the right or wrong of his actions. He could feel

injustice to himself right keenly, and yet would not shrink from endangering to the last degree the well-being and reputation of the person he professed to love better, and himself believed he loved better than any one else in the world. But these thoughts went on in him as it seemed almost without his thinking them at all — outwardly he was engrossed with the passions before him. The father, too, seemed now to have lost the power of motion, and lay with his eyes closed breathing heavily. But presently he made what Donal took for a sign to ring the bell. He did so, and Simmons came. The moment he entered, and saw the state his master was in, he hastened to a cupboard in the room, took thence a bottle, poured from it a teaspoonful of something colorless, and gave it to him in water. It brought him to himself. He sat up again, and in a voice hoarse and terrible as if it came from the tomb, said,

“Think, Lord Forgue, of what I have told you. While you do as I would have you, all is safe. But take your way without me, and I will take mine without you. You can go.”

Donal went at once, leaving Forgue where he had placed him, apparently still unable to move.

And what was Donal to do or think now? Perplexities accumulated upon him. Happily there was time to think and to pray. Here was a secret come to his knowledge affecting the whole history, not merely of the youth who was his enemy and the boy who was his dear friend, but society itself, and it might be the condition of many. Alas for the children upon whom the sins of the fathers are visited by those guilty or capable of like sins themselves! But

there is another who visits them, and in another fashion! What was he to do? To hold his tongue and leave the thing alone as not belonging to him, or to speak out as he would have done had the case been his own, and let the truth be known — the only thing that ought to be, the only thing indeed that can be known? Ought this man to be allowed a chance of marrying his cousin? Ought the next heir to the lordship to be left to go without his title? Had he not a claim upon Donal for the truth? True, Donal thought little of such things himself, but that hardly affected his duty in the matter. He might think little of money, but would he therefore look on while a pocket was being picked? He would rather have had nothing to do with the matter, but if he had to do with it, he must act. In the meantime however, he could have no assurance that the earl was speaking the truth — that he was not merely making the statement and using the threat that he might have his way with his son! True or not, what a double-dyed villain was the father!

That afternoon Davie found his tutor absent, and requiring to have a question said over to him again before he was able to comprehend and answer it.

CHAPTER XXIV.

INTO THE OLD GROOVES.

ONE thing only was clear to Donal, that for the present he had literally nothing to do with the affair. There was now no question as to the succession ; before that arose Forgee might be dead ; before that, his father might have betrayed the secret of his birth ; and, more than all, the longer Donal thought about the affair the greater was his doubt whether the father had spoken the truth — whether he had not merely made the statement, and uttered the threat founded upon it, in order to get the better of his son, and reduce him to obedience — whether an evil or righteous obedience being no matter. Certainly the man who could to his son say such a thing of his mother, must be capable of the wickedness the supposition assumed ! But the thing remaining uncertain, he was assuredly not called upon to act in the matter. He could not however fail to be interested in seeing how Forgee would carry himself ; his behavior now would go far to settle his character for life ! If he were indeed as honorable as he would like to be thought, he would explain all to Eppie, and set himself to find some way of earning his and her bread. Coming to his father with the request that he would help to put him in the way of doing so, the unnatural sire would, if there was untruth in what he had said,

be thus compelled to confess it. But the youth himself did not seem to cherish any doubt of the truth of what had fallen in rage from his father's lips; to judge by his appearance, in the few and brief glances Donal had of him during the next week or so, the iron had sunk into his soul. He looked more wretched than Donal could have believed it possible for man to be — abject quite, manifesting very plainly what a miserable thing, how weak and weakening is the pride of this world. And Donal could not help thinking at first that he who could be so cast down was not one from whom to expect any greatness of action. There was on the contrary great ground for fearing that he would not show honesty enough to oppose his father, declining a succession which was not his — and that although it would leave the way clear to his marrying Eppie. Whether any of Forgue's uneasiness arose from the fact that he had been present at the disclosure, or pretended disclosure concerning his social position, Donal could not tell. Thinking of Donal as his enemy, he could hardly fail to regard him as a dangerous holder of his secret; even were Donal the honest man he was not willing to allow him to be, might he not be supposed the rather to feel bound to do something in the matter? But on the other hand, such had seemed the paralyzing influence of the shock upon him, that Donal doubted if he had been, at any time during the interview, so much aware of his presence as not to have forgotten it entirely before he came to himself. Had he remembered the fact, would he not have come to him either to attempt securing his complicity, or at least to pretend to ask his advice? Certainly, if he wanted to do right, he

could scarcely stand in need of advice ; there could be but one way, and that was plain before him ! So it seemed at the first flush to Donal ; but presently he began to see that there were many things an equivocating demon could urge on the other side ; the claims of his mother ; the fact that there was no near heir ; — he did not even know who would come in his place ! that he would do quite as well with the property as another ; that he had been already grievously wronged, and his mother's memory would yet be more grievously wronged were the truth declared : that the whole matter of marriage was but a form ; that the marriage had been a marriage in the sight of God, and as such surely he of all men was in heaven's right to regard it !

His mother had been the truest of wives to his father, though he could by no means feel sure that his father had been the same to her ! These and many things more Donal saw he might plead with himself ; and if he was indeed the man he had given him no small ground to think, he would in all probability listen to them. He would assert the existence of many precedents in the history of noble families — that it was hardly to be believed by one knowing the too frequent character of their heads, that any one of the noble descents in possession was without some blot on its scutcheon, however well it might have been concealed ; and he would judge it the cruellest thing of all to have let him know the blighting fact, seeing that in ignorance he might have succeeded, though without a right, yet none the less with a good conscience. But what kind of a father was this, thought Donal, who would thus defile his son's conscience !

For to what end could he have told him but one that, involved that as a necessary concomitancy — he had not done it in revenge, but to gain his object by his son's submission! Whether the poor fellow leaned to the noble or ignoble it was no marvel, he said then, that he should wander about looking hardly worthy of the name of man! He wished he would come to him, that he might try to help him. He could at least encourage him to refuse the evil and choose the good. But the foregone passages between them rendered that sorely improbable. In the meantime, seeing he did not go to her at once, it was no wonder that his visits to Eppie should be intermitted, as Donal, from what he could read in her countenance and bearing, judged they were: in such mood he must at least be occasionally regarding as conceivably his treachery against both her and society; he could not be saying "Lead me not into temptation;" if not actively tempting himself, he was submitting to being tempted; he was lingering in the evil land.

Andrew Comin staid yet a week — slowly, gently fading out into life — darkening into eternal day — forgetting into knowledge itself. Donal was with them when he went, but there was little done or said: he crept into the open air in his sleep, to wake from the dreams of life and the dreams of sleep both at once, and see them all mingling together behind him, blending into the look of one vanishing dream of a somewhat troubled, yet oh how precious night now it was past and gone! What must not that be? And it is waiting each of us ay we meet it in peace; and when we wake may we find ourselves still with *him!*

Doory was perfectly calm. When Andrew gave

his last sigh, she sighed too, said, "I winna be lang, Anerew!" and said no more. Eppie wept bitterly. Some of her sorrow was, that she had not done as he would have had her, and more came from the thought of how little he had reproached her.

Donal went every day to see them till the funeral was over — at which it was surprising to see so many of the town's folk. Most of them had regarded the cobbler as a poor talkative enthusiast with far more tongue than brains. Because they were so far behind and beneath him they saw him very small.

One cannot help reflecting what an indifferent trifle the funeral, whether plain to bareness, as in Scotland, or lovely with meaning as it often is in England, to the spirit who has dropped his hunting shoes on the weary road, with all the clothes and dust and heat of the journey — nay, who has dropped the whole world of his pilgrimage, which never was, never could be, never was meant to be to any one his home, but merely the place of his sojourning, in which the staliest house of marble can be but a tent — cannot be a house, still less a home. Those of us who do not, never could be made to feel at home here save by a mutilation, a depression, a lessening of our being; and those who do feel at home, will one day, by the growth of that being, come also to feel that this is not their home, not the true house of their birth.

For some time Donal's savings continued to support the old woman and her granddaughter. But ere long she got so much to do in the way of knitting stockings and other small things, and was set to so many light jobs by kindly people who respected her

more than her husband because she was more ordinary, that she seldom troubled him. Miss Carmichael had offered to do what she could to get Eppie a place, if she answered certain questions to her satisfaction. How she met her catechising I do not know ; perhaps she had the sense to reflect that she had herself made the thing necessary — anyhow, she so far satisfied her interrogator that she set herself in earnest to find for her a place in Edinburgh. Eppie wept bitterly at thought of leaving a country in which she had had so much joy and sorrow ; but she knew there was no help for it ; rumor had been cruel and not all untrue, and in that neighborhood there was no place for her such as she would take. And all the time she waited, not once did Lord Fergie, so far as she knew, try to see her ! When he gave her up to Donal, he had given her up altogether, thought Eppie ; and notwithstanding his kindness to her house, she all but hated Donal — perhaps the more nearly hated him that her conscience told her he was in the right in all that he had done.

A place was found for her, one in which she would be well looked after, Miss Carmichael flattered herself, and easily persuaded the old grandmother ; and with many tears, and without one sight of her lover. Eppie went away. Then things with Donal returned into the old grooves at the castle, only the happy thought of his friend the cobbler hammering and stitching down below was gone. It did not matter : the craftsman was a nobleman now — because such he had always been.

Fergie kept mooning about, doing nothing, and recognizing nowhere any prospect of help save in

utter defeat. If he had had anything like the faith in Donal his brother had, he might have had help fit to make a man of him, and that he would have found in himself to be something more than being an earl. He would have helped him to look things in the face and call them by their own names, and it might have been the redemption of his being. To let things be as they in reality are, and act with truth in respect of them, is to be a man. Forgue showed little sign of manhood, present or to come. He was to be seen oftener than before on horseback, now riding furiously over everything, as if driven by the very fiend, now dawdling along with the reins on the neck of his weary animal. Thus Donal once met him in a narrow lane. The moment Forgue saw him, he pulled up his horse's head, spurred him hard, and flew past Donal as if he did not see him, but looking as if he would have had the lane yet narrower: Donal shoved himself half into the hedge and escaped with a little mud.

CHAPTER XXV.

FURTHER SEARCH.

ONE morning as Donal sat in the schoolroom with Davie, there came a knock to the door, and Lady Arctura entered.

"The wind is blowing from the southeast," she said.

"Listen then, my lady, whether you can hear anything," said Donal. "I fancy it is a very precise wind that is required to enter properly."

"I will listen," she answered, and went.

The day passed and he heard nothing more. He was at work in his room in a warm evening twilight, when Davie came running to his door, and said that *Arkie* was coming up after him. He rose and stood at the top of the stair to receive her. She had heard the music, she said, — very soft. Would he not go on the roof?

"Where were you, my lady," asked Donal, "when you heard it? I have heard nothing up here."

"In my own little parlor," she answered. "It was very faint, but I could not mistake it."

They went at once upon the roof. The wind was soft and low, an excellent thing in winds. They made their way quickly over the roof. They knew the paths of it better now, and they had plenty of light, although the moon, rising large and round, gave

them little of hers yet, and were presently at the foot of the great chimney-stack, which grew like a tree out of the roof, its roots going down to the very roots of the house itself. There they sat down and waited and hearkened.

“I am almost sorry to have made this discovery,” said Donal.

“Why,” asked Lady Arctura. “Should not the truth be found, whatever it may be?”

“Most certainly,” answered Donal. “And if this be the truth, as I fully expect it will prove, then it is well it should be found to be the truth. What I meant was that I could have wished — I should have liked better that it had been something we could not explain.”

“I do not quite understand you.”

“Things that cannot be explained so widen the horizon around us! open to us fresh regions for question and answer, for possibility and delight! They are so many kernels of knowledge closed in the hard nuts of seeming contradiction. — You know, my lady, there are stories of certain houses being haunted by a mysterious music presaging some so-called evil to the family?”

“I think I have heard of such. But if our music had been of that kind, we should, don't you think, have had more than the usual share of earthly ills?”

“And yet,” rejoined Donal, “if we had believed so about it, I can hardly doubt that, watching, we should have found some evil or other, always at hand to assume the place of the thing predicted by the music — though never once surmised, or in the least prepared for thorough means of the warning.”

“Where can be the use of such intimations?” said Arctura.

“I do not know,” answered Donal. “I see not the smallest use in them. If they were of use, surely they would be more common. If they were of use, why should those less blessed of the Lord of the universe have them, and his poor not have them?”

“Perhaps just for the same reason that they have their other good things in this life,” said Arctura.

“I am answered,” confessed Donal, “and have no more to say to that point. But there is not much use in speculating before we know that they are facts upon which we would speculate. I am not denying the occurrence of such things—only saying that I should like to examine into them before speculating upon them. But there are some who, if you propose to examine into anything, immediately set you down as an unbeliever in that thing. A man who wants to find out what the Bible really means, is, by those who do not believe in it a tenth part as much as he, set down as an unbeliever in the Bible; whereas it is a proof of the very strongest probability to the contrary. But for these tales, if they require of us the belief in any special care over such houses, as if they were more precious in the eyes of God than the poorest cottage in the land, I cast them from me.”

“But,” said Arctura, in a deprecating tone, “are not those houses which have more influence more important in the sight of God than others?”

“Surely—those which have the most good influence; such, so far as history goes, are not the great houses of a country. Our Lord was not an Asmonean prince, but the son of a maiden with no

worldly claim, his reputed father a poor working man."

"I do not see what that has to do with it! — I mean, I should like to understand what you mean by that."

"You may be sure the Lord took the position in life in which it was most possible to do the highest good! and without driving the argument, for every work has its own specialty, it seems at least probable that the true ends of his coming may thereafter be better furthered from the standpoint of humble circumstances, than from that of rank and position."

"I notice this in you," said Arctura, "that you always speak as if there were nothing else to be cared about, or minded as anything worth, but the things that Jesus Christ came for? Is there *nothing* but salvation worthy a human being's regard?"

"If you give a true enough and large enough meaning to the word *salvation*, I answer you at once, *nothing*. Just in proportion as a man is saved, will he do the work of God's world aright — the whole design of it being this — to rear a beautiful holy family for himself, the Father in Heaven, and for each other his children. The world is his nursery for his upper rooms — for a higher and nobler state of being — a state which can be developed only by the doing of the will of God. Any state that could be otherwise developed would be nothing worth. Through that alone can we be filled with him as our conscious life, and that is salvation. Oneness with God is the end of all this order of things. When that is attained, God only knows in what glorious regions of life and labor he will place us, able to do greater things than

the Lord himself did when he was on earth!—But was not that *Æolus*? Listen!”

They listened, and there came a low prolonged wail.

Donal had left the ladder on the roof in readiness from their last visit; he set it up in haste, climbed to the gap, and with a great sheet of brown paper which he had had ready in his room, stood leaning against the chimney, on the northern side of the cleft, waiting for the next outcry of the prisoned chords. For some time there was no further sound, and he was getting a little hopeless and tired of his position, while *Arctura* stood at the bottom of the ladder looking up, when suddenly came a louder blast, and he heard the music quite distinctly in the shaft beside him. It swelled and grew. He spread his sheet of paper over the opening; the wind blew it flat against the chimney; the sound immediately ceased. He removed it, the wind still blowing, and again came the sound quite plainly. The wind grew stronger, and they were able to use the simple experiment until there was no shadow of a doubt left on either of their minds that they had discovered the source of the music: by certain dispositions of the paper they were even able to modify it.

At length Donal descended, and addressing *Davie*, said,

“*Davie*, I wish you not to say a word about this to any one until *Lady Arctura* or I give you leave. You have a secret with us now, and with no other person. You know the castle belongs to *Lady Arctura*, and she has a right to ask you not to say this to *any* one without her permission.—I have a reason, my lady,

for wishing this," he added, turning to Arctura;—"will you join me in desiring it of Davie at my request? I will immediately tell you why I wish it, but I do not want Davie to know yet. You can at once withdraw your prohibition, you know, if you should not think my reason a good one."

"Davie," said Arctura, "I too have faith in Mr. Grant; and I beg you will do as he says."

"Oh surely, cousin Arkie!" said Davie; "I would have minded without being told so very solemnly."

"Very well, then, Davie," said Donal: "you run down and wait for me in my room. I want to have a little talk with Lady Arctura. Mind you go exactly the way we came."

Davie went, and Donal turning to Arctura, said,

"You know the story of the hidden room in the castle, my lady?"

"Surely you do not believe in that!" she answered.

"I think there may be such a place, though I need not therefore accept any of the stories I have heard about it."

"But surely if there were such a place it would have been found long ago."

"They might have said that on the first reports of the discovery of America!" returned Donal.

"That was so far off, and across a great ocean."

"Here may be thick walls, and hearts careless or frightened! Has any one ever set in earnest about finding it?"

"Never that I know of."

"Then your argument falls to the ground. If you could have told me that any had tried to find it, but

without success, I would have admitted the force of it, though even then it would not have satisfied me without knowing the plans they had taken—that they were sufficient, and had been thoroughly carried out. On the other hand it may have been known to many who never told it.—Would you like to know the truth about this as well as about the music?”

“I should indeed. But would not you be sorry to lose another mystery?”

“On the contrary, there is only the rumor of a mystery now; we do not know that there really is one. We do not quite believe the report. We are not indeed at liberty, in the name of good sense, quite to believe it now. But perhaps we may find that there is really a mystery—even one that must continue for the present a mystery—one we may never in this world be able to account for, one suggesting a hundred mysterious explanations. I would not for a moment annoy you. I do not even wish to press it.”

Lady Arctura smiled very sweetly.

“I have not the slightest objection,” she said. “If I seemed for a moment to hesitate, it was only that I wondered what my uncle would say to it. I should not like to vex him.”

“Certainly not; but do you not think he would be pleased?”

“I will speak to him,” she said, “and find out. He hates what he calls superstition, and I fancy has more curiosity than delight in legendary things: he will be willing enough, I think. I should not wonder if he joined you in the search.”

But Donal thought with himself that if he were so

inclined it was strange he had never undertaken the thing. Something in him said that the earl would not like the proposal.

They were now slowly making their way to the stair.

“But just tell me, Mr. Grant, how you would set about it,” said Arctura.

“If the question were merely whether or not there was such a room, I would” —

“But how could you tell that there was one except you found it?”

“By finding that there was some space not accounted for.”

“I do not see how.”

“Would you mind coming to my room? It will be a lesson for Davie, too: I will show you in a few minutes.”

She assented. They joined Davie, and Donal gave them a lesson in cubic measure and contents. He showed her how to tell exactly how much space must be inside any given boundaries: if they could not find so much, then some of it was hidden somehow! If they measured all the walls of the castle, allowing of course for the thickness of those walls, and then, measuring all the rooms and open places within those walls, allowing also for the dividing walls, found the space they gave fell short of what they had to expect, they must conclude either that they had measured or calculated wrong, or that there was a space in the castle to which they had no access.

“But,” continued Donal, “if the thing was to discover the room itself, I would set about it in a different way: I should not care about all that previous

measuring ; I should begin to go all over the castle, and get it right in my head, fitting everything inside the castle into the shape of it in my brain. Then if I came to a part I thought suspicious, I should examine that more closely, take exact measurements both of the angles and sides of the different rooms, passages, etc., and so find whether they enclosed more than I could see. I need not trouble you with the exact process as there will probably be no occasion to use it."

"Oh, yes, there may be," returned Lady Arctura. "I think my uncle will be quite willing."

With that she turned to the door and they went down together. When they reached the hall Davie ran away to get his kite and go out.

"But you have not told me why you would not have the music spoken of," said Arctura, stopping and turning to Donal.

"Only because, if we went to make any further researches, the talk about the one would make them notice the other ; and the more quietly it can be done the better. If we resolve to do nothing, we may at once unfold our discovery.

"We will be quiet in the meantime," said Arctura.

That night the earl had another of his wandering fits, also that night the wind blew strong from the southeast. Whether that had anything to do with the way in which he heard his niece's proposal the next day, I will leave to my reader : but it made Arctura very uncomfortable. The instant he understood what she wished his countenance grew black as thunder.

"What !" he cried. "You would go pulling the grand old hulk to pieces for the sake of a foolish tale

about the devil and a rascally set of card-players! By my soul! I'll be damned if you do. — Not while I'm above ground at least! That's what comes of giving such a place into the hands of a woman! It's sacrilege! By heaven, I'll throw my brother's will into chancery rather!"

He went on raging so that he compelled her to imagine there was more in it than seemed, and while she could not help trembling at the wildness of the temper she had roused, she repented of the courtesy she had shown him: she had a perfect right to make what investigations she pleased. If her father had left her the property, doubtless he had good reasons for doing so; and those reasons might have lain in the character of the man before her!

"Possibly through all his rage the earl read something of the thought which had sent the blood of the Graemes mantling in her cheek and brow.

"I beg your pardon, my love," he said, "but he was my brother, and has been dead and gone for so many years! 'Tis no great treason to remark upon the wisdom of a dead man — dead and all but forgotten! Doubtless he was your father" —

"He *is* my father!" said Arctura sternly and coldly.

"Ah; well as you please! but must I therefore regard him as Solon?"

"I wish you good-night, my lord," said Arctura, and came away very angry.

But when presently she found that she could not lift up her heart to her Father in Heaven, gladly would she have sent that anger from her. Was that a thing to be indulged in — was it not plainly in its nature

something else than good when it came between her and her Father in Heaven? With all her might she struggled and prayed against it. A great part of the night she was awake, but ended by pitying her uncle too much to be *very* angry with him any more, and then fell asleep.

In the morning she found that while she was no longer in wrath against him, any sense of his having authority over her had all but vanished. It was not his suggestion concerning her father's will that had offended her, but the way he spoke of her father. He might do as he pleased about the will! she would do as she pleased about the house. If her father knew him as she knew him, and wisely feared his son would be like him, certainly he had done well to leave the property to her! But was it not time that she took upon herself something of the duties of a landlord? "I wonder," she said to herself, "what Mr. Grant thinks of me — doing next to nothing for the people committed to my care?" — She was afraid she could never do anything while her uncle continued to receive the rents as before, and give orders to Mr. Graeme! She ought to take the thing in her own hands! But what was she to say to Mr. Grant about the present matter? She thought and thought, and concluded to say nothing, but encourage him to make some of the calculations he had proposed. This she did, and for some days nothing more was said. But she was haunted with that interview with her uncle, and began to be haunted with vague uneasiness as to the existence of some dreadful secret about the house. It must be remembered that she was of a most delicately impressionable nature; that

the very rarity of her mental gifts depended in part upon this impressionableness, that she felt things keenly and retained the sting long after most would have forgotten the cause of it. I cannot help fancying that but for the derived instincts of her race, this sensitiveness might have degenerated into weakness. It had not, however, and now never would — for she had developed will and faith.

CHAPTER XXVI.

THE DREAM.

ONE evening, as Donal was walking in the park, Davie, who was now advanced to doing a little work without his master's immediate supervision, came running to him to say that Arkie was in the schoolroom and wanted to see him.

He hastened to her.

"I want a word with you without Davie," she said, and Donal sent the boy away.

"I have debated with myself all day whether I should tell you," she began, with a trembling voice, "but I think I shall not be so much afraid to go to bed to-night if I tell you what I dreamt last night."

Her face was very pale, and there was a quiver about her mouth: it seemed as if she would burst into tears.

"Do you think it is very silly to mind one's dream?" she added.

"Silly or not," answered Donal, "as regards the general run of dreams, it is pretty plain you have had one that must be paid some attention to. What we *must* heed, it cannot be silly to heed. No doubt many of our dreams are silly as to their contents, which yet as dreams may be noteworthy phenomena."

This he added seeking to calm her evident perturbation with the coolness of the remark.

“I am in no mood, I fear, for any philosophy,” said Arctura, trying to smile. “This one has taken such a hold of me that I cannot rest till I have told it, and there is no one I could tell it to but yourself. Any one else would laugh at me — at least I know Sophia would — but you never laugh at anything — at least any person — I mean unbelievably or unkindly. It will be enough to you that the dream troubles me, and I cannot get it out of my head. I shudder to think of it. I fell asleep as usual, quite well, and no more inclined to dream than usual, except that I had for some days been troubled with the feeling that there was something not right about the house. The dream however does not seem to have anything to do with that. I found myself in the midst of a terrible because most miserable place. It was like brick-fields, but deserted brick-fields — that had never been of any use. Heaps of bricks were all about, but they were all broken, or only half burnt. For miles and miles they stretched around me. I walked and walked to get out of it. Not a soul was near me or in sight, nor sign of human habitation from horizon to horizon. All at once I saw before me an old church. It was old, but showed its age only in being tumbled-down and dirty — it was not in the least venerable. It was very ugly too — a huge building without any shape, like most of our Scotch churches. I shrunk from the look of it; it was horrible to me; I feared it; but I must go in. I went in. It looked as if nobody had crossed its threshold for a hundred years. The pews remained, but were mouldering away; the sounding-board had half fallen on the pulpit, and rested its edge on the book-board; and the great galleries had

tumbled in parts into the body of the church, and in others hung sloping from the walls. When I had gone in a little way, I saw that the centre of the door had fallen in, and there was a great, descending, soft-looking slope of earth, mixed and strewn with bits of broken and decayed wood, from the pews that had fallen in when the ground gave way, or it might be from the coffins of the dead, underneath which the gulf had opened. I stood gazing down in horror unutterable. It went down and down I could not see how far. I stood fascinated with the unknown depth, and the feeling of its possible contents, when suddenly I perceived that something was moving in the darkness — something dead — something yellow-white. It came nearer, and I saw it was slowly climbing the slope — a figure as of one dead and stiff, laboring up the steep incline. I would have shrieked, but I could neither cry nor move. At last, when about three yards below me, it raised its head : it was my uncle — but as if he had been dead for a week, and all dressed for the grave. He raised his hand and beckoned me — and I knew in my soul that down there I must go, without question of would or would not. I had to go ; and I never once thought of resisting — whether from a sense of the mastery of fate, born in me from some unbelieving sire, I cannot tell, but immediately, my heart going down within me like lead, I began the descent. My feet sank in the mould of the ancient dead as I went ; it was soft as if thousands of graveyard moles were for ever burrowing in it ; down and down I went, sinking, and sliding with the moving heap of black mould. Then I began to see — I know not how — you see somehow in dreams without light

— I saw the sides and ends of coffins in the earth that made the walls of the gulf, which came closer and closer together, and at length, scarcely left me room to get through without touching the coffins. But I sought courage in the thought that these had long been dead, and must by this time be at rest, though my uncle was not, and would not stretch out mouldy hands to lay hold of me. At last I saw he had got to the very point and bottom of the descent, where it was not possible to go any farther, and I stood, more composed than I can understand, and waited.”

“The wonder is we are so believing in our dreams,” said Donal, “and not more terrified.”

“Then I was able to speak and I said to my uncle, ‘Where are you taking me?’ but he gave me no answer. I saw now that he was heaving and pulling at a coffin that seemed to bar up the way in front. I began to think I was dead and condemned to be there, alive and conscious, nor allowed to go out of my body till the day of the resurrection because I could not believe that the very same flesh and bones were to rise again. But just as my uncle got the coffin out of the way, I saw a bright silver handle on it with the Morven crest; and the same instant the lid of it rose, and one rose out of it, and it was my father, and he looked alive and bright, and my uncle looked beside him like a corpse beside a soul. ‘What do you want here with my child?’ he said; and my uncle seemed to cower before him. ‘This is no place for her,’ he said, and took my hand in his and said, ‘Come with me, my child.’ And I followed him — oh, so gladly! And my fear was all gone, and so was my uncle. He was leading me up where we had come down, but just

as we were stepping up, as I thought, into the horrible old church, where do you think I found myself — in my own room. I looked round me, and no one was near me, and I was very sorry my father was gone, but glad to be in my own room. Then I woke — but not in my bed — standing in the middle of the floor, just where my dream had left me! That was the most terrible thing about it. I cannot get rid of the thought that I went somewhere wandering about. I have been haunted the whole day with the terror of it. It keeps coming back and back, so that I am sometimes afraid of going silly with thinking of it.”

“Did your uncle give you anything?” asked Donal.

“I do not see how he could; but that would have explained it.”

“You must change your room, and get Mrs. Brooks to sleep near you.”

“That is just what I should like, but I am ashamed to ask her.”

“Tell her you had a dreadful dream, and would like to change your room for a while.”

“I will. I feel almost as if I had been poisoned.”

Gladly would Donal have offered to sleep, like one of his own old colleys, on the door-mat to make her feel more safe; but that would not do. Mrs. Brooks was the only one to help her. She had her bed moved to another part of the castle altogether, and Mrs. Brooks slept in the dressing-room.

For Donal, the dream roused strange thoughts in him. He would gladly have asked leave to occupy her room for a while, but he feared thereby to keep Lady Arctura’s imagination on the stretch, which already seemed overwrought.

“Make of them what he may,” said Donal to himself, “man cannot get rid of the element which in our ignorance and outsidersness we call the supernatural, as if anything could be supernatural except the God who is above the nature !”

He had already begun to make some observations towards verifying the existence of the hidden room. But he made them in the quietest way, attracting no attention, and had already satisfied himself it could not be in this or that part of the castle. It might be in the foundations, among the dungeons and cellars, and built up ; but legend pointed elsewhere. If he could have had any one, even Davie, to help him, he would have set himself at once to find out what there was to be found out concerning the musical chimney ; but that he could not easily do alone, for he could not go poking here and there into every room, and examining its chimney without attracting attention. And as to his measurements, such was the total irregularity of a building that had grown through centuries to fit the varying needs and changing tastes of the generations, he found it harder to satisfy himself than he had thought : without free scope to go about and make them and his observations at his leisure, he could not quite succeed. He could carry a good deal in his head, but not so much as he found necessary, so great, considered from the point of architecture, was the seemingly chaotic element in the congeries of erections and additions of different ages, fitted together by various contrivances more or less ingenious, and with variously invented communication with each other. Within the castle, besides the two great courts, were other smaller spaces for the admission

of light and air, which added to the difficulty ; all the principal buildings and many of the stories were of different heights ; there were partial breaks in the continuity of floors ; and various other obstructing irregularities.

CHAPTER XXVII.

FINDING THE PLACE.

THE autumn brought terrible storms. Many fishing boats came to grief. Of some, the crews lost everything: of others, the loss of their lives delivered them from the smaller losses. There were many bereaved families in the village, and Donal went about among them, doing what he could, and seeking help for them where his own ability would not reach their necessity. Lady Arctura wanted no persuasion to go with him in many of his visits, and this intercourse with humanity in its simpler forms, of which she had not had enough for the health of her nature, was of the greatest service in her renewed efforts to lay hold upon the skirt of the Father of men, for nothing helps many, perhaps all, to believe in God so much as the active practical love of the neighbor. If he who loveth not his brother whom he hath seen, can ill love God whom he hath not seen, then he who loves his brother must find it the easier to love God. To visit the widow and the fatherless in their afflictions; to see and know them as her own kind; so to enter into their sorrows: to share in the elevating influence of grief genuine and simple, the same thing in every human soul, Arctura found was to draw near to God. She met him in his children without being able to produce any theologi-

cal justification of the fact. She did not yet know that to honor, love, and be just to our neighbor, is to be religious ; and the man who does so will soon find that he cannot do without that higher part of religion, which is the love of God, and without which the rest will sooner or later die away, leaving the man the worse for having once had it. She found the path to God the easier that she was now walking it in company with her fellows. We do not understand the *next* page of God's lesson-book ; we see only the one before us ; nor shall we be allowed — it is indeed impossible we should do it — to turn the leaf until we have learned the lesson of that before us : when we understand the one before us, then first are we able to turn the next. The troubles of others now took her so far off her own, that, seeing them at a little distance from her, she was better able to understand them ; and all the time her soul, being honest, had been growing in capacity to understand. The Perfect Heart could never have created us except to make us wise, loving, obedient, honorable children of our Father in Heaven.

One day, after the fishing boats had gone out, there came on a terrible storm. Most of them made for the harbor again — such as it was, and succeeded in gaining its shelter ; but one boat failed. How much its failure was owing to Lord Fergue and Eppie, cannot be said, but Stephen Kennedy's boat drifted ashore bottom upward. His body came ashore close to the spot where Donal, half asleep, half awake, dragged the net out of the wave. There was sorrow afresh throughout the village. Kennedy was a favorite ; and his mother was left with no son to come

sauntering in with his long slouch in the gloamin', and with but half a hope of ever seeing him again. For the common Christianity does not go so much farther than paganism towards comforting those whose living loves have disappeared from their gaze! What Forgue thought I do not know — nothing at all, probably, as to any share of his in the catastrophe. But I believe it made him care a little less about marrying the girl, now that he had no rival ready to take her. I think perhaps he may have felt that he had one enemy the less, and one danger the less, in the path he would like to tread. Soon after, he left the castle, and if his father knew where he was, he was the only one who did so. He did not even say good-by to Arctura. His father had been pressing his desire that he would begin to show some interest in the owner of the castle; he had professed himself unequal to it at present, but said that, if he were away for a while, it would be easier when he returned.

The storms were over, and the hedges and hidden roots had begun to dream of spring, when one afternoon Arctura, after Davie was gone, with whom she had been at work in the schoolroom over some geometry, told Donal her dream had come again.

“I cannot bear it,” she said. “This time I came out not into my own room, but on to the great stair, I thought; and I came up the stair to the room I am in now, and got into bed. And the dreadful thing is that Mrs. Brooks tells me she saw me standing in the middle of the floor.”

“Do you imagine you had been out of the room?” asked Donal in some dismay.

“I do not know; I cannot tell. If I were to find

that I had been, it would drive me out of my senses, I think. I keep on thinking about the lost room; and I am almost sure it has something to do with that! When the thought comes to me I try to send it away, but it keeps coming."

"Would it not be better to find the place, and have done with it?" said Donal.

"If you think we could," she answered, "without attracting any attention."

"If you will help me, I think we can," he answered. "That there is such a place I am greatly inclined to believe."

"I will help you all I can."

"Then first, we will make a small experiment upon the shaft of the music-chimney. It has never been used for smoke at all events since those chords were put there; may it not be the chimney to the very room? I will get a weight and a strong cord. The wires will be a plague, but I think we can manage to pass them. Then we shall see how far the weight goes down, and shall know on what floor it is arrested. That will be something gained, limiting so far the plane of inquiry. It may not be satisfactory, you know; there may be a turn in it to prevent the weight from going to the bottom; but it is worth trying."

Lady Arctura seemed already relieved and brightened by the proposal.

"When shall we set about it?" she asked almost eagerly.

"At once, if you like," said Donal.

She went at once to get a shawl, that she might go on the roof with him. They agreed it would still be better not to tell Davie. There should be no danger

of their design oozing out. The least hint might give rise to a shrewd guess, and then to a watchful observation, with the true idea for a guide ; that would be just as bad as full information !

Donal found a suitable cord in the gardener's tool-house, also a seven pound weight. But would that pass the wires? He laid it aside, remembering an old eight-day clock on a back stair, which was never going. He hastened to it, and got out its heavier weight, which he felt almost sure might be got through the cords. These he carried to his own stair, at the foot of which he found Lady Arctura waiting for him.

There was that in being thus associated with the lovely girl, and in knowing that her peace had begun to grow through him, that she trusted him implicitly, looking to him for help, and even protection ; in knowing too that nothing but assault in one sense, and another could be looked for from uncle or cousin, and that he held in his mind a doubt, a strong ground of suspicion against them which might one day put in his hands the means of protecting her, should any undue influence be brought to bear upon her to make her marry Forgue ; there was that in all this I say, that stirred to its depths the devotion of Donal's deeply devoted nature : with the help of God he would help her to overcome all her enemies, and leave her a free woman — a thing worth any man's doing, if he did no more on this earth, and returned to God who sent him ! Many an angel had been sent on a shorter errand ! He would give himself to it, after his duty to Davie !

Such were his thoughts as he followed Arctura up the stair, she carrying the weight and the cord, he the

ladder, which it was not easy to get round the screw of the stair. Arctura trembled with excitement as she ascended, and grew frightened as often as she found she had outstripped him. Then she would wait till she saw the end of it come poking round, when she would start again towards the top.

Her dreams had disquieted her, and she feared at times they might be sent her as a warning. Had she not been taking a way of her own, and choosing a guide instead of accepting the instruction of those whose calling it was to instruct in the way, to lead in the way of understanding? But the moment she found herself in the healthy open air of Donal's company, her doubts seemed to vanish; such a one as he must surely know better than any of those the true way of the spirit! Was he not, for one thing, much more childlike, much more straightforward, simple and obedient than those? Doubtless the truth was the truth; and nothing but the truth could be of the smallest final consequence; but was not Donal at least as likely to possess the truth as Mr. Carmichael? Older, and possibly more experienced, was he one whose light shone clearer than Donal's? He might be a priest in the temple, but there was a Samuel in the temple as well as an Eli! It was the young, strong, ruddy David, the slayer of lion and bear in defence of his flock, who was the chosen of God and sent to kill the giant! What although he could not wear big Saul's armor? he could kill a man too big to put it on. Thus meditated Arctura as she climbed the stair, and her hope and courage grew. If there was in Arctura some tendency to disease, it was the disease that comes of the combination of

over delicate feelings with keen faculties, and these subjected to the rough rasping influences of the coarse, self-satisfied, and unspiritual. Naturally conditioned no one could be sounder than she ; but the disorder of a headache would be enough to bring her afresh under the influence of the hideously false systems she had been taught, and would wake in her all kinds of painful and deranging doubts and consciousnesses. Subjugated as she had been to the untrue, she required for a time till her spiritual being should be somewhat individualized, strengthened, and settled by sympathy, to be under the genial influences of one who was not afraid to believe, one individually and immediately under the teaching of the master. Nor was there danger so long as he sought no end of his own, desiring only his will so long as he could say, "Whom is there in Heaven but Thee? and there is none upon earth that I desire besides Thee!"

By the time she reached the top she was radiant, not merely with the exertion of climbing, loaded as she was ; she was joyous in the prospect of a quiet hour with one whose presence and words gave her strength, who made the world look less mournful, and the will of God altogether beautiful ; who taught her that the glory of the father's love lay in the inexorability of its demands, that it is of his deepest mercy that no one can get out without paying the uttermost farthing. She was learning these things — understood them not a little in her best moments.

They stepped out upon the roof into the gorgeous afterglow of an autumn sunset. The whole country, like another sea, seemed flowing out from that well of color, in tidal waves of an ever advancing creation.

It broke on the old roofs and chimneys, splashing its many tinted foam all over them, while folded in it came a cold thin wind, that told of coming death, but fused the death and the creation into one, and so presented them to the faith of the Christian. She breathed a deep breath, and her joy grew. It is wonderful how small a physical elevation, lifting us into a thinner, but how little thinner, air, serves to raise the human spirits! We are like barometers, only work the other way: the higher we go, the higher rises our mercury.

They stood for a moment in deep enjoyment, then simultaneously turned to each other.

"My lady," said Donal, "with such a sky as that out there, it hardly seems as if there could be room for such a thing as our search to-night! The search into hollow places, hidden of man's hands, does not seem to go with it at all! You read there the story of gracious invention and deepest devotion, here the story of greed, and self-seeking, which all concealment involves."

"But there may be nothing, you know, Mr. Grant!" said Arctura, a little troubled about her ancient house.

"True; but if we do find such a room, you may be sure it has had to do with terrible wrong, though what we may never find out. I doubt if we shall even discover any traces of it. I hope in any case you will keep a good courage."

"I shall not be afraid while you are with me," she answered. "It is the terrible dreaming that makes me weak. In the morning I tremble as if I had been in the hands of some evil power in the night."

Donal turned his eyes upon her. How thin she looked in the last of the sunlight! A pang went through him at the thought that one day he might be alone with Davie in the castle, untended by the consciousness that a living light and loveliness was somewhere — what matter where? — flitting about its gloomy and ungenial walls. But now he would banish the thought! He would not think it! How that dismal Miss Carmichael must have worried her! That was the way they of the circumcision worried St. Paul; only he was able to bear, and able to defend himself from their doctrine! When the very hope of the creature in his creator is attacked in the name of religion; when his longing after a living God is met with the offer of a paltry escape from hell, how is the creature to live? It is God we want, not Heaven! God, not an imputed righteousness! remission, not mere letting off! love, not endurance for the sake of another, even if that other be the one loveliest of all.

They turned from the sunset and made their way to the chimney-stack. There once more Donal set up his ladder, and having tied the clock-weight to the end of his cord, dropped it in, and with a little management got it through the wires. Then it went down and down, gently lowered, till the cord was all out, and still it would go.

“Do run and get some more,” said Arctura.

“You do not mind being left alone?” asked Donal.

“Not if you will not be long,” she answered.

“I will run,” he said, and run he did, for she had scarcely begun to feel the loneliness when he returned panting.

Taking the end she had been holding, he tied on the fresh cord he had brought, and again lowered away. Just as he was beginning to fear that after all he had not brought enough, the weight stopped, resting, and drew no more.

“If only we had eyes in that weight,” said Arctura, “like those the snails have at the end of their horns!”

“We might have greased the weight,” said Donal, “as they do the sea lead to know what kind of thing is at the bottom! It would be something to see whether it brought up ashes! I will move it up and down a little, and if it will not go any farther, I will mark the string at the mouth, and draw it up.”

He did so.

“Now we must mark off it the height of the chimney above the parapet wall,” said Donal; “and now I will lower the weight into the little court, until this last knot comes to the wall; then we shall know how far down the height of the house it went inside it.— Ah, I thought so!” he went on, looking over,— “only to the first floor, or thereabouts.— No, I think it is lower! But you see, my lady, the place with which the chimney, if chimney it be, communicates is somewhere about the middle of the house, and it may be on the first floor: we can’t judge very well here. Can you imagine what place it might be?”

“I cannot,” answered Lady Arctura; “but I will go to every room to-morrow — or this evening perhaps.”

“Then I will draw the weight up, and let it down the chimney again as far as it will go, and there leave it for you to see, if you can, somewhere below. If

you find it, then we must leave the chimney, and try another plan."

It was done, and they descended together. Donal went back to the schoolroom, not expecting to see Lady Arctura before the next day. But in half an hour she came to him, saying she had been into every room on the floor and its adjoining levels, but had failed to see the weight in any chimney.

"The probability then is," said Donal, "that somewhere thereabout lies the secret ; but we cannot be sure, for the weight may never have reached the bottom of the shaft, but be resting at some angle in its course. Now let us think what we shall do next."

As he spoke he placed a chair for her by the fire. Davie was not there, and they had the room to themselves.

CHAPTER XXVIII.

A CONFIDENTIAL TALK.

BUT they were hardly seated when Simmons appeared, saying he had been looking everywhere for her ladyship, for his lordship was taken as he had never seen him before : he had fainted right away in the half-way room, as they called that on the stair.

“I will come to you instantly, Simmons. Hurry and get what things you think likely : you know him much better than I do.”

Lady Arctura and Donal hastened to the room indicated, and there saw the earl stretched motionless and pale on a couch. But for a twitching in a muscle of the face they might have concluded him dead. When Simmons came they tried to get something down his throat, but without success ; he could not swallow. Lady Arctura thought it would be better to get him to his room, and the two men carried him up the stair.

He had not been long laid on his bed before he began to come to himself ; and then Lady Arctura thought it better to leave him with Simmons whom she told to come to the library when he could, and let them know how he was. In about an hour he came and told them his master was better.

“Do you know any cause for the attack ?” asked her ladyship,

“No, my lady—only this,” answered the butler, “that while I was there with him, giving him my monthly accounts—I’m sure I wonder he takes the trouble to ask for them! I could charge him half as much again for everything, he pays so little attention to the particulars!—I was standing by my lord doing nothing, while he was pretending to look at my bills, when all at once there came a curious noise in the wall. I’m sure I can’t think what it was—an inward rumbling it was, that seemed to go up and down the wall like a groaning, and then stopped all at once and altogether. It sounded nothing very dreadful to me, only perhaps if it had been in the middle of the night, I mightn’t have liked it. But his lordship started, turned quite pale and gasped, and cried out, and laid his hand on his heart. I made haste to do what I could for him, but it wasn’t altogether like one of his ordinary attacks, and I got frightened and came for you. He’s such a ticklish subject, you see, my lady! I get quite alarmed sometimes to be left alone with him. It’s his heart, you see, my lady; and you know, my lady, I should be sorry to frighten you, but *you* know, Mr. Grant, with that complaint a gentleman may go off at any moment, without warning. I must go back to him now, my lady, if you please.”

When Simmons was gone, Arctura turned and looked at Donal.

“We must be careful,” he said.

“We must,” she answered.

“Thereabouts is one of the few places in the house where you can hear the music.”

“But why should my lord be so frightened?”

“He is not like other people, you know. He

leads such a second, and perhaps more life-like life because of the things he takes, that I believe he does not know with any certainty whether some things actually happen to him or not. But I must go."

"One word," said Donal: "where did you use to hear the music? It seems to me, when I think of it, that, though all in the house have heard it, you and your uncle have heard it oftener than any one else."

"I hear it in my own room. I don't think my uncle does in his; but you know where we found him that night; in his strange fits he often goes there. But we can talk more to-morrow. Good-night."

"I will remain here for the rest of the evening," said Donal, "in case Simmons might want me to help with his lordship."

It was well into the night, and Donal still sat reading in the library, when Mrs. Brooks came to him. She had had to get his lordship "what he ca'd a cat — something or ither, but was naething but mustard to the soles o' 's feet to draw away the bluid."

"He's better noo," she said. "He's taen some ane or ither o' thae horrid drogues he's aye potterin' wi' — tryin' I doobtna to learn the trade o' livin' for ever. But that's a thing the Lord has keepit in 's ain han's frae the first, seein' the tree o' life was never aten o', an' never wull be noo i' this warl', seein' it's lang transplantit. But eh as to livin' for ever, or I wad be his lordship, I wad gie up the ghost at ance!"

"What gars ye say that, Mistress Brooks?" asked Donal.

"It's no ilk ane I wad answer sic a question til!" she replied; "but I'm sae weel assured ye hae sense an' hert eneuch baith no to hurt a cratur', 'at I may

jist gang sae far as say to yersel', an' 'atween the twa' o's, 'at I hae h'ard frae them that's awa' — them 'at weel kent, bein' aboot the place an' trustit, that whan the fit was upon him he was fell cruel to the bonnie wife he had merried somewhaur abro'd and broucht hame wi' him — til a cauld-hertit country, I hae na doobt, puir thing, she thought it !”

“ But how could he have been cruel to her in the house with his brother? *He* would never have connived at the ill-treatment of any woman under his roof, even if his brother was the wretch to be guilty of it !”

“ Hoo ken ye sae weel what the auld yerl was like ? ” said Mrs. Brooks, with a sly glance at the speaker.

“ I ken only,” answered Donal, straight out, as was his wont, “ 'at sic a bonny dauchter could hardly hae been born o' ony but a man 'at — well 'at wad at least behave til a wuman like a man.”

“ Weel, ye're richt ! He was the ten'erest-hertit man, they say. But he was far frae stoot, an' was a heap by himsel', nearhan as muckle as his lordship, the present yerl. An' the lady was that prood, an' that dewotit to the man she ca'd her ain, that never a word o' what gaed on cam to the ears o' his brither, or Is' warran' ye there wad hae been a fine steer ! His cruelty cam', she said — my auld auntie said — o' jist some kin' o' madness 'at they hadna gotten a name for yet ; but I doobt there's a madness o' the hert as weel's o' the heid — a madness 'at taks men to think their women a kin' o' a property o' their ain, han' let ony gait the deevil puts intil them. I winna say mair about it, but cries i' the deid o' the nicht, an' never a shaw i' the mornin' but white cheeks an' reid

een, tells their ain tale. Ony gait, she dee'd 'at nicht hae lived but for *him*, an' her bairnie dee'd afore her; an' the wrangs o' bairns an' women stick lang to the wa's o' the universe, an' some said she cam efter him again efter she was gane — I kenna; but I hae seen an' hard i' this hoose what — but Is' haud my tongue an' ken naething: a' I say is, he was no a guid man to the puir woman! — for whan it comes to that, it's no *my leddy* an' *mem*, but we're a' women thegither. She dee'd no here, I un'erstan."

CHAPTER XXIX.

ANOTHER SUGGESTION.

THE next day, when he saw Lady Arctura, Donal said to her,

“It seems to me, my lady, that, if your uncle heard the noise of our plummet inside the wall, the place can hardly be on the floor you searched; for that room, you know, is on the stair before you come to the first floor. Still sound does travel so through a wall! I cannot tell. We must betake ourselves to measurement, and that is not easy to do thoroughly without being seen. There was another thing, however, came into my head last night; it might serve to give us a sort of parallax. You tell me you hear the music in your room. I should like if you would let me have a look about it; something might suggest itself! Is it the room I saw you in when once I opened the door by mistake?”

“Not that,” answered Arctura, “but the bedroom opening from it—the one I have left for the present. you can examine it when you please. Will you come now?”

“Is there any danger of the earl’s suspecting what we are after?”

“Not the least. The room is not far from his, but is not in the same block of the building, and there are thick walls between. Besides he is too ill to be up.”

She led the way, and Donal followed to and up the main staircase to the second floor, and into the small, curious old-fashioned room, evidently one of the oldest in the castle, which Lady Arctura had chosen, chiefly from her pleasure in its old antiquity, to occupy as her own sitting-room. Perhaps if she had lived less in the shadow, she might have chosen a less gloomy one: she could see the sky only through a little lane of walls and gables and battlements. But inside, it was very charming with the oddest nooks and corners, recesses and projections. It looked as if it had been an afterthought, and accommodated to a space all but intruded upon from every quarter, and by every shape of threatening material. Donal cast round his eyes, and turning to Lady Arctura said:

“I do wish, my lady, you would not sit so much where there is so little sunlight! All outer and inner things are so tied together! or, rather, are indeed in their origin one — so that the light of the sun, being the natural world-clothing of the truth, the mind that sits much in the physical dark, is in danger of missing a great help to understanding the things of the light. — If I had been your spiritual adviser,” he went on with a smile, “I would have counselled you to change this room for one with a broad fair outlook, so that, when you had gloomy thoughts about God, they might have his eternal contradiction in the face of his world and his shining sun.”

“It is but fair to tell you,” said Arctura, “that Sophia would have had me do so; but while I felt about God as she had taught me, what could the light of the sun be to me?”

“Yes, what indeed!” returned Donal.—“I feel,

do you know," he added presently, his eyes straying about the room as if in search of a suggestion, "as if I were here searching into a human nature. A house looks always to me so like a mind — full of strange inexplicable shapes at first sight, which gradually arrange, disentangle, and explain themselves as you go on to know them. Then in all houses, there are places we know nothing about yet, or have but a vague idea or feeling of their existence — just as in our own selves, who carry in us deeper mysteries far than any we can suspect in another."

"But it is a very old house," said Arctura, "so many hands have been employed in the building through so many generations, and so many fancied as well as real necessities have been at work!"

"That is true; but where the house continues in the same family, the builders have transmitted their nature as well as their house to those who come after them."

"Then you think," said Arctura, almost with a shudder, "that I cannot but inherit from my ancestors a nature like the house they have left me — that the house is therefore a fit outside to my inner nature — as the shell fits the snail?"

"Yes; but with an infinite power to modify the relation. I do not forget that every one is born nearer to God than to any ancestor, and that it rests with every one to cultivate either the *godness* in him, or his ancestral nature — to choose whether he will be of God, or those that have gone before him in the way of the world. It is only another way of putting the old story of the natural and the spiritual man, the fight between whom is just the history of the world,

that is, of the human race. The one who sets right in himself the faults which he has inherited from those that went before him makes an atonement for the sins of those who went before him; he is baptized for the dead, only in a far more powerful way, not with water but with fire."

"That seems to me very strange doctrine," said Arctura, with tremulous objection.

"One thing only I insist upon in regard to it," said Donal, — "that if you do not like it, you will not try to believe it. It is, however, unavoidably true that we inherit from our ancestors, if not vices any more than virtues, yet tendencies to both vices and virtues. That which was a vice indulged in by my great-great-grandfather, may be in me a tendency to the same or a similar vice."

"Oh, how horrible!" cried Arctura.

"We need God not the more, but we know the better how much we need him," said Donal. — "But," he continued, "I am only bringing nearer to you the thing you have been taught from childhood. You allow that we are all born with a tendency to sin, which, as is generally said, we inherit from Adam: this horrifies nobody, for it seems far back and away from us; men forget that it is in them all the same; and when, instead of referring the thing to Adam, I say some nearer relative, the fact assumes a definite and individual relation which makes it horrible — as indeed it may well seem!"

"But is it not horrible to — to — have to believe that vices are mine, come down to me from old wicked people, of whom I only know that they were wicked?"

“God, I say again, is nearer to you —between you and those vices. In you they are not vices —only possibilities which cannot become vices until they are obeyed. It rests with the man to destroy in himself even the possibility of them, by opening the door to him who knocks. Then, again, there are all kinds of counteracting and redeeming influences in opposite directions. Perhaps, wherein the said ancestor was most wicked, his wife, from whom is the descent as much as from him, was specially lovely. The ancestor may, for instance, have been cruel, and the ancestress tender as the hen that gathers her chickens under her wing. The danger, in an otherwise even nature, is of being caught in some sudden gust of unsuspected passionate impulse, and carried away of the one tendency before the other has time to assert and the will to rouse itself. But that is not likely to happen except where there is self-confidence or much self-blindness. Those who try to do right may hope for warning. They will not, I think, be allowed to go far wrong for want of that!”

“You comfort me a little.”

“And then you must remember,” continued Donal, “that nothing in its immediate root is evil; that sometimes it is from the best human roots that the worst things spring—just because the conscience and the will have not been brought to bear upon them. If the king of the grandest country will not rule it in the fear of God, that country must come to desolation. No one, for instance, will be so full of indignations, of fierceness, of revenge, as the selfish man born with a strong sense of justice. If the scope and tenor of his way have been for self, this sense will

have borne mainly or only upon his own concerns, and the result must be as I have said, and may end in murder. Ourselves our centre instead of God, is the source of all wrong and all misery. It is terrible to think of being one moment without him. Never deserted child could be other than a poor picture of that. Even in our commonest every-day work we need the consciousness of his constant presence. I know there are many will say this is but to encourage a diseased religiosity; I say it is simplest, highest, healthiest — nay the only healthy nature. All disease lies in being self-occupied, and that is just what nothing can deliver us from but the conscious presence of him who, whether we know it or not, is nearer to us than our consciousness. To become conscious of the great fact of life cannot surely be other than healthful, yea healing to the uttermost! What shall the nature do that is made like God, and so finds itself anything but enough for itself? I but argue for the knowing of the truth, as the truth, immediately and clearly. It can be no complete nature that requires to have its own necessities hidden from it. We may need to have the intermediate operations hidden, lest we should be absorbed in them, as we are in the cares and means of the world; but not the life itself, the source of all, the only pledge of harmonious being to those who have not created themselves and *must* live. If that be hidden, we worship idols — worst of all ourselves. The animals are not yet, I suppose, so much in the image of God that they need this, and yet I cannot help thinking that they are in some way aware of God's presence, though they do not know it as his presence: I utter

but a truism, for what is their own life but his presence? I have been a good deal occupied lately," continued Donal, "with a strange inquiry: how much the devil may have had to do with the animal creation. Of course he never could have created anything; evil can only destroy; but he may have been able to spoil awfully; and that may be why the Lord speaks of serpents and scorpions as belonging to the power of the enemy. But this is not the room in which you have heard the music!"

"No, it is through here."

Lady Arctura opened the door of her bedroom. Donal glanced round it. It was as old-fashioned as the other.

"What is behind that press there — that wardrobe, I think you call it?" asked Donal.

"Only a shallow recess," answered Lady Arctura. "I had the wardrobe put there, but was disappointed to find it too high to get into it — that is all; there is no mystery there!"

Possibly had the press stood right into the recess, Donal would not have thought anything about it, but having caught sight of the opening past the side of it, he was attracted by it, and fancied he should like to examine it. It was in the same wall in which was the fireplace, but did not seem formed by the projection of the chimney into the room: it did not go to the ceiling.

"Would you mind if I moved the press a little aside?" he asked.

"Do what you like," she answered.

Donal moved it with ease — it was but a single hanging press. The opening behind it was small and

rather deep for its size. The walls were wainscotted all around to the height of four feet or so, but the recess was not. There were signs of hinges and a bolt at the front edges of it, which seemed to show that it had once been a cupboard or press, with a door that probably corresponded with the wainscotting, only there were no signs of shelves in it. It seemed as old as the wall, and the plaster as hard as the stone itself. But he was not satisfied. Taking a big knife from his pocket, he began tapping it all round. The moment he struck the right hand side of it, he started. There was something peculiar about the sound it gave. It was smoother than the rest too, though quite as hard.

“You do not mind if I make a little dust here?” he said.

“Do anything you please,” again answered Lady Arctura.

“Then could you find me something to put down, that the housemaid may see nothing to attract her attention?”

She brought him a towel and he spread it on the floor. The point of his knife would not go through the plaster! It was not plaster he thought, but stone whitewashed — one smooth stone or slab, for he could find nothing like a joint. Searching with his knife near the edge of the recess however, he found its outer limit a few inches from the edge, and began to clear it. It gave him a line straight from the bottom to the top of the recess where it turned in at right angles.

“There does seem, my lady;” said Donal, “to be some kind of opening here closed up, though of course

it may turn out of no interest to us ; shall I go on and see what it really is ? ”

“ By all means, ” she answered, turning pale.

Donal looked at her a little anxiously. She understood his look.

“ You must not mind my feeling a little silly, ” she said. “ I am not silly enough to give way to it. ”

Donal smiled a satisfied smile, and went on again with his knife, until at last he had cleared the whole outline of a slab of stone, or it might be slate, that filled nearly all the side of the recess. It was scarcely sunk in the wall, and had but a thin coating of plaster over it. Clearing the plaster then from the outside edge of the recess, he came upon a piece of iron fixed in it, which might have been part of some former fastening. He showed it to his companion.

“ Go on ! go on ! ” she only said.

“ I fear I must get a better tool or two, ” answered Donal. “ How will you like to be left ? ”

“ I can bear it. But do not be long. A few minutes may be enough to evaporate my courage. ”

Donal hurried down, and got a hammer and chisel, and a pail to put the broken plaster in. Lady Arctura stood and waited, and the silence closed in upon her.

She began to feel *cerie*, and as if she could if she were only to will to exert a power latent in her, see through the wall when she pleased, and discover what lay beyond it. But she did her endeavor to prevent herself from so willing, and sat mentally reduced to all but inaction. She started to her feet with a smothered cry ; a knock not over gentle, sounded on the door of the sitting-room, between which and the bedroom where she was the door stood open. She

darted to it, and flung it to — then to the press — it was very light and with one push had it almost in its place again. Then she opened the door of communication, thinking she would wait for a second knock before she answered, that it might seem she had not heard the first. But as she opened the one door, the other slowly, softly opened also — a little way, and the face she would least of all have chosen to see looked in ; at that moment she would rather have had a visit from behind the press ! It was her uncle. His face was cadaverous ; his eyes dull, but with a kind of glitter in them, and his bearing like that of a housebreaker. In terror of his looks, in terror lest he should come into the room and discover what they had been about, in terror lest Donal should the next moment appear in the passage, wishing to warn the latter, and aware that even at that early hour of the day her uncle was not quite himself, with sudden intuitive impulse she cried out hurriedly the moment almost she saw him,

“ Uncle ! uncle ! what is that behind you ? ”

She thought afterwards it was a cruel thing to do, but she did it, as I have said, by swift, unreflecting instinct.

He turned like one struck on the back, imagined something doubtless of which Arctura knew nothing, cowered to two thirds of his height, and crept away. Though herself trembling from head to foot, Arctura was seized with such a pity that she followed him till she saw him into his room, but dared not go farther, she could not have said why. She stood a moment in the passage, and presently thought she heard his bell ring. This caused another undesirable risk : Sim-

mons might meet Donal! But she was the next moment relieved by seeing Donal appear round the corner in the passage, carrying the implements he had gone to procure. She signed to him to make haste, and he was hardly inside her room when she saw Simmons coming along on his way to his master's room. She drew the door to her, as if she had just come out, and said, "Knock at my door as you come back, and tell me how he is, I heard his bell ring."

"I will, my lady," answered Simmons, and went. Then Arctura told Donal to go on with his work, but stop it the moment she made a noise with the handle of the door. She then resumed her place outside till Simmons should reappear. For full ten minutes she stood waiting: it seemed an hour. Though she heard Donal at work within, and knew Simmons must soon appear; though the room behind her was her own and known to her from childhood, the long empty passage in front of her as familiar to her as any in the house, appeared almost frightful. At last she heard her uncle's door, and steps, and the butler came.

"I can't make him out, my lady," he said. "It is nothing very bad I think this time, but, my lady, he gets worse and worse—always a taking more and more of them horrid drugs. It's no use trying to hide it: he'll drop off sudden one o' these days. I've heard say laudanum don't shorten life; but it's not one nor two, nor half-a-dozen sorts o' laudanums he keeps mixing in that inside of his! The end must come, and what it'll be who can tell! It's better you should be prepared for it when it do come, my lady! I've just been a-giving him some under the skin—

with a little sharp-pointed thing, you know, my lady, he says it's the only way to take some medicines. He's just a slave to his medicines, my lady!"

Arctura returned to Donal, and told him what had happened. He had found the plaster hard, but had already knocked it all away, disclosing a slab much like one of the great stones covering some of the roofs. Nor was it long now before he succeeded in prising it out. The same instant a sense of dank chill assailed them both, accompanied by a humid smell as from a long-closed cellar. The room grew cold and colder as they stood and looked, now at each other, now at the opening in the wall, where they could see nothing but darkness. Donal was anxious as to how Arctura would stand the discovery, and she was anxious to see how he would take it. In truth he had enough to do to hide for her sake all expression of the awe he felt creeping over him; he must treat the thing as lightly as he could!

"We are not very far from something, my lady!" he said. "It makes one think of what he said who carries the light everywhere — that there is nothing covered that shall not be revealed, neither hid that shall not be known. Shall we leave it and put in the stone again?"

"I can bear anything," said Arctura, with a shiver, "except an unknown, terrible something."

"But what can you do when we have found it all out?"

"I can let the daylight in upon it all."

Donal was glad to see her color return as she spoke, and a look of determination come in her eyes.

"You will not be afraid then to go down with

me?" he said, "or will you not rather wait till I explore a little, and come and let you know what I have found?"

"That would be cowardly. I will share with you. I shall be afraid of nothing — not *much* — not *too* much, I mean — with you with me."

Fancying from his not immediately replying that Donal was hesitating to take her,

"See!" she said; "I am going to light a candle and ask you to come down with me — if down it be, for who knows yet if it be not up?"

She lighted the candle.

"We had better lock the door, don't you think, my lady?" said Donal. "If any one were to come it might be awkward."

So it would be to have the door locked," answered Arctura. "And we should have to lock both doors! — I mean the one into the passage too, and that would make it look very strange if I were wanted. We had better replace the press as nearly as we can — pull it after us when we are behind it."

"You are right, my lady. But I will first stow away these things — may I put them here?"

"Anywhere out of sight."

"Now can you take some matches with you?"

"Yes, to be sure."

"I will let you carry the candle. I must have my hands free. You will let the light shine as much past me as you can, that I may see as well as I may where I am going. But I shall depend most on what my hands and feet tell me.

Their preparations made, Donal took the light and looked in at the opening. It went into the outside

wall of the house, and turned immediately to the left. He gave back the candle to Arctura, and went in. Arctura followed close, holding the light to the best advantage she could. There was a stair in the thickness of the wall, going down steep and straight. It was not wide enough to let two go down abreast.

“Put your hand on my shoulder, my lady,” said Donal. “That will keep us together; and if I fall, you must stand till I get up again.”

She did as he said, and they began their descent. The steps were narrow and high, therefore the stair was steep, but there was no turning. They had gone down about thirty steps, when they came to a level passage, turning again at right angles to the left. It was twice the width of the stair, the sides of it, like those of the stair, unplastered, of roughly dressed stones. It led them straight to a strong door which opened towards them, but which they could not move: it was locked, and in the rusty lock, through the key-hole, they could see the key in it. But to the right was another door, smaller, which stood wide open. They went through, and by a short passage entered an open space. Here on one side seemed no wall, and they stood for a moment afraid to move lest they should tumble into darkness. But by sending the light in this direction and that, and feeling about with hands and feet they soon came to an idea of the kind of place in which they were. It seemed a sort of little gallery with arches on one side, opening into a larger place, the character of which they could only conjecture, so vaguely could they see into it. Almost all they could determine was that it went below and rose above where they stood. Behind them was a plain

wall such as they had already passed on both sides of them.

They had been talking in suppressed, awe-filled whispers, and were now in silence endeavoring to send their sight through the darkness when Donal said,

“My lady, listen.”

Yes; from above their heads came the soft faint sounds of the ærial music. It had such a strange effect!—like news of the still airy night and the keen stars, away in spaces so wide that, in meeting extremes, they affect us as the most awful of prisons—come down through secret ways into the dark places of the earth. It restored Arctura’s courage greatly.

“That must be just as the songs of angels sounded, with news of high Heaven, to the people of old times!” she said.

But Donal’s mind was in a less poetic mood. He was occupied with the material side of things at the moment.

“We cannot be far,” he said, “from the place where our plummet came down! But let us try on a little further.”

At the other end of the little gallery, they came again to a door and on to a stair, turning again to the right, and again they went down. Arctura kept up bravely. The air was not so bad as they might have feared, though it was very cold and damp. This time they went down only about seven feet or so, and came to a door to the right. To Donal’s hand it revealed itself as much decayed, and when he raised an ancient rusted latch and pushed it, it swung open against the

wall, dropping from one hinge as it moved. Two steps more they descended, and stood on a floor, apparently of stone.

Donal thought at first they must be in one of the dungeons of the place which had been built up ; but recalling how far they had come down, he saw it could not be so.

A halo of damp clung to the weak light of their candle, and it was some moments before they even began to take in the things around them, so as to perceive what sort of a place they were in. Something about the floor caught Donal's eye, and looking down in the circle of the light, he saw, thickly covered with dust as it was, that it was of marble, in squares of black and white. Then there came to him a stream of white from the wall, and he saw it was a tablet of marble ; and at the other end was something that looked like an altar, or perhaps a tomb.

"We are in the old chapel of the castle I do believe!" he said — but he added instantly with an involuntary change of voice and a shudder through his whole being,

"What is that?"

Arctura turned ; her hand sought his, and clasped it convulsively, nor did she make other answer. They stood close to something on which their glance had not yet rested ; for Arctura had been holding the candle so that the light had been between them and it : before they could be conscious of even an idea of what it might be, they both felt the muscles of neck and face drawn, as if something was assuming a dominion over their persons which was about to take them out of their own power. But they were both persons

with living wills and would not thus be overcome. They gazed ; perception cleared itself, and slowly they not only saw but understood what the thing was. They saw and knew that, with strangest dream-like incongruity and unfitness, the thing they stood beside was a bedstead — dark, with carved posts and wooden tester, low but richly carved, for that even the poor one candle sufficed to show sufficiently to fix it in the memory of their eyes, ready to return thereafter ; a carved bedstead in the middle of the floor of what was plainly a chapel ! There was no speculating for them, however ; they could only see, not think. Donal took the candle from Arctura, and moved it about, looking. From under the tester hung large fragments of some heavy stuff that had once served for curtains, but was now only clouts. They did not dare to touch it. It looked as if it had scarcely so much cohesion as the dust on a cobweb. It was dust indeed, hanging together only in virtue of the lightness to which its decay had reduced it. On the bedstead lay a dark mass, that looked like bed clothes and bedding turned to dust, or almost to dust, for they could see something like embroidery : yet in one or two places — oh so terrible in the dismay of its dismal ash-like decay — dark almost like burnt paper or half-burnt rags, flaky and horrid, like a memory out of which the love is gone ! But heavens ! what is that shape in the middle of the heap : and what was that on the black pillow ? — and what was that thick line that stretched towards one of the posts at the head ? They stared in silence. Arctura pressed close to Donal. Involuntarily almost his arm went round her to protect her from what no

human arm could protect her from — to protect her from what threatened indeed to overwhelm himself — the inroad of an unearthly horror. Plain to the eyes of both of them, though neither spoke to say so, the form in the middle of the bed before them was that of a human body, which had slowly crumbled where it lay. Bedding and blankets and quilts, sheets and pillows had crumbled with it through the long wasting years, but the mass had carried something of its shapes down into the dust; that was a head that lay on the pillows; that was the line of a long arm that came out from under the clothes and pointed away towards the right-hand bedpost. But what was that which came down from the bedpost to meet the arm of dust? God in Heaven! there was a ring round the post, and from it came a chain; and there was another ring on the pillow, through which — yes, actually through it, though it was dust — the line of dust passed. The thing was clear — so far clear, at least, as that here was a death-bed, indeed — perhaps a murder-bed — certainly a bier, for still upon it laid the body that had died on it — had lain, as it seemed, for hundreds of years, nor ever been moved for kindly burial: the place had been closed up and so left! A bed in a chapel, and one dead thereon! how could it have been? Had the woman — for Donal imagined he could see even then in the form of the dust that it was the body of a woman — been carried thither for the sake of dying in a holy place? or had she there sought refuge from some persecutor? No, alas! for she had not escaped thither; she was a prisoner, mad perhaps, more likely hated, and the victim of a terrible revenge —

— left perhaps to die in hunger, or in disease. — Ere they left the place another conjecture had occurred to both of them which neither spoke. — Neglected or tended who could tell? but there she had died, and so been buried !

Donal felt Arctura trembling in his arm — either from the cold or the gathering terror of the place, and the presence of ancient unburied death. He drew her closer to him, and turning would have borne her from it. But she said, whispering in his ear almost, as if the dust might hear and be disturbed,

“ I am not afraid — not *very*. Do not let us go till we have seen the place.”

They moved from the bed and went to the other end of the chapel, almost clinging to each other as they went, and noting three narrow lancet windows, with what seemed stained glass in them, and a stone wall outside them, and the tablet, carved with an inscription they did not care to stop and read.

It was an altar table they came to with a marble top, which had also been covered with a piece of embroidery. There also on the cloth whose remains yet covered the marble lay something that more than suggested the human shape — small — so small though — plainly the dust of a very little child. The sight was full of suggestion as sad as it was fearful. Neither of them spoke. They turned away, nor either looked at the other. The awful silence of the place seemed to settle down around them, with something positive in its negation. Donal cast his eyes around once more. As near as he could judge the place might be fifteen feet wide and five and twenty long, but it was hard to tell with so little light, and

he was anxious now to get Lady Arctura out of it. There would be plenty of time to examine further. He drew her away and she yielded. When they reached the narrow stair, he made her go first now: he would be between her and the terror of the place! As they passed the door on the other side of the little gallery, down whose spiracle came no faintest sound of the aerial music, Donal thought with himself that there was the direction of further investigation; but he would say nothing of it until Lady Arctura should be a little accustomed to the thought of the strange and terrible things they had already discovered. So slowly, the lady still leading, they ascended to the room they had just quitted. Donal replaced the slab, and propped it in its position, so that there should be as little draught as possible to betray the gap; and having replaced the press, put a screw which he had provided when he went down, through the bottom of it from the inside into the floor, so as to fix it in its place, lest any one should move it.

The difficulty now was, how, after such an experience together, to part, and spend the rest of the day separated! There was all the long afternoon and the evening to be accounted for!

“What a happy thing,” said Donal, “that you had already changed your bedroom!”

“It is well indeed!” she answered quietly. Looking in her face now once more, for he had then just risen from fixing the press, he saw that she looked very white, as was not surprising.

“Do sit down for a minute, my lady,” he said. “I would run and send Mrs. Brooks to you, but I do not like to leave you.”

“No, no; we will go down together! Will you please get me that bottle of Eau de Cologne.”

Donal hardly knew what a bottle of Eau de Cologne was like, but he darted to the table and guessed correctly. She poured some on her handkerchief, and began presently to take deep breaths, as recovering from an attack of faintness. The air of the place and its terrible contents had begun to show their effects. But with a strong effort she seemed now to banish their oppression, and rose to go down: it seemed as if no word could yet be spoken between them as to what they had discovered. But Donal felt and saw that she must continue with him as much as possible for the rest of the day.

“Would you not like, my lady,” he ventured to say, “to come to the schoolroom this afternoon, and do something while I give Davie his lessons? There is surely something I could help you in.”

“Yes:” she answered at once. “I should like it so much! Is there not something you could make me do?—something you could teach me?”

“I should like very much to set you going with a little Greek, and a little mathematics—geometry to begin with.”

“You frighten me!”

“The fright wouldn’t outlast the beginning,” said Donal. “Anyhow, there you will have Davie and me for company! You must feel it very lonely sometimes, now you see so little of Miss Carmichael, I fancy.”

“She has not been near me since that day—you remember?”

“Very well.”

“ I suppose she will not come again till I ask her : and I fear she would take advantage of that, assuming that I was sorry, and could not do without her.”

“ I would let her wait, if I were you, my lady,” said Donal, “ she sorely wants a little humbling : and she will have it one day, or more probably many days, before she will have enough.”

“ You do not know her, Mr. Grant, if you think anything I could do or say would have that effect on her !”

“ And you mistake me, my lady, if you suppose I think it your business to humble her ! Only you need not allow her to ride over you as she used to do, all in virtue of her knowing nothing really, and a great many things unreally. Unreal knowledge is, I sometimes think, worse than absolute ignorance. Let her wait till she wants to see you. Is not Miss Graeme a much more desirable person for a friend ?”

“ She is much more loveable : but she does not trouble her head about the things I care for. I mean religion,” she added hesitatingly.

“ So much the better” —

“ Mr. Grant !”

“ You did not let me finish, my lady !” said Donal amused. “ So much the better, I was going to say, till she has begun to trouble her *heart* about it — or rather to untrouble her heart with it ! The pharisee troubled his head, and I daresay his conscience too and did not go away altogether unjustified ; but the poor publican, as we, in our stupid pitying ways, are ready to call him, troubled his heart about it, and that trouble once set a going, there was no fear of the rest. Head and all must soon follow.”

“I understand you now, and I beg your pardon. You are always right, I do think!”

“That no one can be, else the whole thing that concerns us would be much too small for us.—But how am I to carry away this pail of plaster without being seen? That is the next thing!”

“I will show you the way to your own stair without going down the great staircase — the way we came once, you may remember. Then you can take it to the top of the house till it is dark. I know you don't mind what you do. But I do not feel comfortable about my uncle's visit. I hope he does not already suspect something! If he were to come in now, however, I think he would imagine everything right. I wonder if he knows all the time where the chapel is — and all about the stair here!”

“It is impossible to say. I think he is a man to enjoy having and keeping a secret.—But tell me now, my lady,” Donal went on, desirous of relieving her mind from the power of external horrors by bringing them into spiritual relations, “don't the things we were saying about the likeness of house to man find general corroboration in our discovery?”

“You don't mean it is like anything in me?” said Arctura, looking frightened.

“I mean no individual application — except as it is like every human soul, and so like me and you and all of us. Here is the chapel of the house, the place they used to pray to God in, when, perhaps, they did not do so anywhere else in the whole building, lost, forgotten, filled with dust and damp,—and the mouldering dead lying there before the Lord, waiting to be made live again — waiting to praise him!”

“I told you you meant me!” said Arctura, with a faint sad smile.

“No, I was not meaning you. I was meaning the family rather. The time is past when it might have meant you. You were long ago aware that there was a dead self lying down in the lost chapel of your being; you were a hungry soul that missed both, and knew without being sure of it that they must be somewhere. You have kept searching for them in spite of all the influences brought to persuade you that there was no such place as you desired, but at best one that would do well enough for common needs, a sort of an old granite quarry to pray in; and you have caught at least a few glimpses of a lovely temple of the living, loving, seeking God, however in some it may be as yet from crime and neglect a mere place of dead men’s bones and uncleanness.”

“I will clean out the temple!” said Arctura, speaking as if to herself, and Donal did not know which temple she intended, whether the chapel of the castle or the temple of her own soul, but I believe, and so did he, that she was mingling the two in her mind. “I will pull down that wall,” she went on, “and the light shall come in again through those windows, and astonish the place with its presence. And all the house will be glad, because there will no more be a dead chapel at the heart of it, but a living temple with God himself in it — there always and forever.

She had spoken under great excitement, her eyes shining in her pale face; she ceased and burst into tears. Donal turned away and proceeded to fill the pail with the broken plaster, and by the time he had done it she had recovered her usual calm. They went

as far as the turret-stair together, and there parted till after luncheon, Donal going up, and Arctura going down.

As the clock upon the schoolroom chimney-piece was striking the hour for lessons, Arctura entered, and as if she had been a pupil from the first, sat down at the table with Davie. Donal set before her a copy of Euclid, and appointed her a task as he might any other pupil, and she began at once to learn it. After a while, so brief that Davie stared incredulous, she said, "If you please, Mr. Grant, I think I could be questioned upon it now;" and a very few moments sufficed to show Donal that she thoroughly understood what she had been learning. He set her then a little more, and so the afternoon went — much to the delight of Davie, who thought it delightful to have cousin Arkie for a fellow pupil. That suchlike intellectual occupation must greatly subserve lady Arctura's health, both of body and mind, Donal, before the afternoon was over, had not a doubt left. It was enough to see with what entire devotion she gave herself to the work set her; and he was glad at heart for her sake, believing that all knowledge helps to the knowing of God by one who already knows him, inasmuch as there is nothing to be known but has its being in him. But he could not help thinking also what a superior nature hers must be, seeing that, after the strange and dreadful things she had been going through that very morning, she was yet able to work so calmly at matters of the mere intellect; not many women, and just as few men, he thought, would have been capable of it.

School over, and Davie gone to his rabbits.

“Mrs. Brooks invites us to take supper with her,” said Lady Arctura. “I asked her to ask us. So if you do not mind, Mr. Grant, you had better make a good tea, and we shall not have dinner to-day. You see I want to shorten the hours of the night as much as I can, and not go to bed till I am quite sleepy. You don’t mind, do you?”

“I am very glad, and you are very wise, my lady,” responded Donal. “I quite approve of the plan, and shall be delighted to spend as much of the night in Mrs. Brooks’ parlor as you please.”

“Don’t you think we had better tell her all about it?”

“As you judge fit, my lady. The secret is in no sense mine; it is only yours, and the sooner it ceases to be a secret the better for all us, I venture to think.”

“I have only one reason for a delay,” she returned. “I need hardly tell you what it is!”

“You would avoid any risk of annoying your uncle, I presume.”

“Yes; I cannot quite tell how he might take it, but I know he would not like it. It is perhaps natural that a man like him should think of himself as having the first and real authority in the house, but there are many reasons why I should not give way to that.”

“There are indeed!” assented Donal.

“Still, I should be sorry to offend him more than I cannot help. If he were a man like my father, I should never dream of going against his liking in anything; I should in fact leave everything to him as long as he pleased to take interest in what was going on. But you know, being the man he

is, that would be absurd. I must not, I dare not, let him manage my affairs for me much longer. I must understand for myself, for surely that was my father's design, how things are going with my tenants!"

"You will not, I hope, do anything without the advice, I should say the presence of a lawyer," said Donal, — "I mean in conference with your uncle?"

"Do you say so?"

"I do indeed. I think it would be very undesirable. I fear I have less confidence in your uncle than you have!"

Arctura made no reply, and Donal grew afraid she did not like his having ventured an opinion about her uncle; but the next moment she looked up with a sad smile, and said,

"Well, poor man! we must not begin comparing our opinions about him; he is my father's brother after all, and I shall be glad if I get through without offending him. But I know my father would be far from satisfied if I left everything to him just as if he had not left everything to me. I cannot help thinking that if he had been another sort of man, my father would have left the estate to him. I wonder they got on together so well as they did."

Donal did not care to say what he thought about this — which was, that very likely, the earl had been cunning enough to present at least a modified character to his brother. He must have blinded him somehow; for how else could those things of which Mrs. Brooks had spoken to him have gone on in the house? while doubtless the state of the late earl's health had rendered the thing easier.

At nine o'clock they were in the housekeeper's

room — a low-ceiled, but rather large room, lined almost all round with oak presses, which were Mrs. Brooks' delight, for she had more than usual nowadays of the old-fashioned housekeeper about her. She welcomed them as if she had been in her own house, and made an excellent hostess, presiding over a Scotch supper of minced collops and mashed potatoes, to which she had added some splendid coffee, on the making of which she prided herself. Nor were her guests loath to partake of it, for neither of them had any desire to shorten their time together, or feared being kept awake. Upon the coffee waited scones of the true sort, just such as Donal's mother would occasionally make for the greatest kind of treat they ever had; and he thought it the nicest meal he had had since leaving home. Mrs. Brooks would have had him, after old, so at least time-honored custom, mix himself a glass of toddy, in which she would have liked to share in a modest fashion, but Donal would not; his mother was prevalent still; and for his own part he never liked his higher to be operated upon from his lower. He felt then as if possessed by a false or at least not quite real self, and as I say, did not like it. But the root of his dislike lay in the teaching of his mother. Unlike not a few young men and women too, he was proud to have learned this or that from his father or mother; it was to him a patent of nobility, a voucher that he was honorably descended: of his birth he was as proud as any man. And this night, arising from his refusal to make himself a tumbler of toddy, the conversation took such a turn that, to Arctura's delight, he was led on to talk about his father and mother, and the surroundings of his

childhood. He told her all about the life he had led ; how at one time he kept cattle in the fields, at another sheep on the mountains ; he told her how he had come to be sent to college, and then came all the story about Sir Gilbert Galbraith ; and the night wore on, and Arctura was enchanted. For himself Donal found it a greater pleasure than he had dared hope for to call back the history which already seemed so far behind him ; for he found that he could more easily than he had expected leave out the part concerning himself which he could not tell : though it had seemed to him all his life latterly, and inextricably mingled with that of his friends, he found as he told that it was nowise necessary to the understanding of the rest. But indeed it surprised him to find also how calmly he could now contemplate what had seemed at one time to threaten an everlasting winter of the soul. Nor was the discovery a pain, as he certainly would have found it, had it come of his ceasing to care for Lady Galbraith : she was his truest friend, whom he could trust with anything ; the dearest of sisters, whom he would rather noy, so true and lovely was the relation between them, have for a sister than for a wife. It was far the better thing that she should be Gibbie's wife and Donal's sister. When they got to Heaven, she would give him the kiss she had refused him down in the granite quarry !

He had fallen into a brief brown study over these things, when all at once a sound of knocking fell on his ear. He started. There was something in it that affected him strangely. Neither of his companions took any notice of it. Yet it was now past one o'clock. It was like a knocking three or four times

with the knuckles of the hand against the other side of the wall of the room.

“What can that be?” he said, listening for more.

H’ard ye never that afore, maister Grant?” said the housekeeper. “I hae grown sae used til’t that my ears hardly tak notice o’t!”

“What is it?” asked Donal.

“Ay, what is’t?” Tell ye me that, gien ye can,” she returned. “It’s jist a chappin’, an’ God’s trowth that’s a’ I ken about the same! It comes, I believe I’m safe to say, ilka nicht; but I couldna tak my aithupo’ ’t, ’cause I hae sae entirely ceased to pay attention til’t. There’s queer things about mony an auld hoose, Mr. Grant, that’ll tak the day of judgment to explain. But they comena nearer me nor the ither side o’ the wa’, sae far as I ken; an’ sae lang as they keep to their ain side o’ that, I dinna see that I need tribble my heid about them. Mony nights I couldna say I h’ard them at a’; yet I dinna doobt they hae been, a’ the same. Efter the experience I had as a yoong lass, awa’ doon in Englan’ yon’er, at a place my auntie got me intil—for she kenned a heap o’ grand fowk throu being hersel’ sae near connectit wi’ them as hoosekeeper i’ this same castel—efter that, I’m sayin’, I wadna need to be that easy scaret!”

“Do tell us about it,” said Lady Arctura. “I don’t think you ever told me.”

“No, my dear lady, I wad never hae thocht o’ tellin’ ye ony sic story, sae lang as ye was ower yoong no to be frichtit at it; for ’deed I think they’re muckle to blame that tells bairns the varra things they’re no fit to hear, an’ sae the dreid gets fixt afore

the sense comes. But Is' tell ye the noo, gin ye wad like to hear't. It's maybe a some awsome story, but there's something unco fulish like intil't as weel. I canna say I think muckle o' craters that tribble their heids about their heids — but that's tellin' afore-han' !”

Here the good woman paused thoughtful.

“I am longing to hear your story, Mrs. Brooks,” said Donal, thinking she waited for some encouragement.

“I'm but thinkin' hoo to begin,” she returned, “sae as to gie ye the richt haud o' the thing at ance. — I'm thinkin' I canna do better nor jist tell 't as it cam to mysel' ! — Weel, ye see, I was but a yoong lass, aboot — weel I nicht hae been twenty or sae, mair or less, whan I gaed til the place I speak o'. It was awa' upo' the borders o' Wales, like as gien folk ower there i' Perth war doobtfu' whether sic or sic a place was i' the hielan's or the lowlan's. The maister o' the hoose was a yoong man awa' upo' 's travels, I kenna whaur — some whaur upo' the continent, but thar's a muckle word; an' as he had the intention o' bein' awa' for some time to come, no carin' that muckle to settle doon an' luik efter his ain, there was but ae gey auld woman to hoosekeep, an' me to help her, an' a man or twa aboot the place to luik efter the garden — an' that was a'. The place was to let, an' was put intil the han's o' ane o' thae agents, as they ca' them, for that same purpose — to be let, that is for a term o' years. Weel ae day there cam a gentleman to luik at the place, an' he was sae weel pleased wi' 't, as weel he nicht, for eh, it was a bonny place — aye lauchin' like, whaur this

place is aye i' the sulks! — Na no aye, I dinna mean that my lady, forgettin' 'at it's yours! But ye maun own it taks a heap o' sunlicht to gat this auld hoose here look onything but some dour — an' I beg yer pardon, my lady."

"You are quite right, Mistress Brooks!" said Arctura, with a smile. "If it were not for you in it, it would be dour, dour."

But with that she cast a look at Donal, as much as to say, "I did not mean not to include you!"

"You do not know how much — I don't believe Mistress Brooks herself knows how much I owe to her, Mr. Grant! I must have gone out of my mind for very dreariness if it had not been for her."

"That I could easily imagine," said Donal; and Mrs. Brooks began again.

"The short an' the lang o' 't was, that the place was let and taen, muckle to the satisfaction o' baith parties, I mak nae doobt; and it was arranged that not only should the auld hoosekeeper, she bein' a fixtur like, should bide, but that I should bide as weel, and as afore, under the hoosekeeper, and haein' naething to do wi' the stranger servants.

"An' sae they cam. There was a gentleman o' a middle age, wi' his leddy some yoonger nor himsel', han'some but no bonnie — only that has naething to do wi' my tale, and I needna tak up yer time, for it's growin' some late."

"Never mind the time, Mistress Brooks, said Arctura; "we can do just as we please with that. One time is as good as another — isn't it, Mr. Grant?"

"One who has often staid out on the hill all night,"

said Donal, "is not likely to fancy it a duty to go to bed at a certain hour! I sometimes sit up half the night myself. I like to know what God's night is like. Only it won't do often, for we have no right to make God's brain into a stupid, ill-working thing, like a watch that won't go."

"It's sair upsettin' to the wark, though," said the housekeeper. "I wonder what the house would be like if I was to do that, and sleep—in the next mornin'!"

"Of course we must all mind what is required of us, if we would take any freedoms with a good conscience," said Donal. "But this will never do for our story! Do go on, please, Mistress Brooks."

"Weel, sir, an' my lady, I'm ready to sit up till the cocks hae dune crawin', an' the day has dune dawin', gien it be to please the ane or the twa o' ye! an' sae for my true tale!—They war verra dacent, weel-behavet fowk, wi' a fine faimily, some grown an' some growin', aboot them. It was jist a fawvour to see sic a halesome clan—frae auchteen or thereawa' doon to a wee toddlin' lassie, was the verra apple o' the e'e to a' the e'en aboot the place. But that's neither here nor yet there! A' gaed on jist as it should gang on whaur the servan's are no ower gran' for their ain wark, nor ower meddlesome wi' the wark o' their neebors; naetihng was negleckit, nor onything girned aboot; and a' was peace an' harmony, as it gangs i' the auld sang aboot bonny Kilmeny—that is, till ae nicht. Ye see I'm tellin' ye as it cam' to mysel' an' no til anither!

"As I lay i' my bed that nicht, an' ye may be sure at my age I lay nae langer nor jist to turn me ower

ance, an' in gineral no that ance — jist as I was fa'in' asleep, up gat sic a romage i' the servan's ha', jist 'aneth whaur I was lyin', that I thoct wi' mysel', what upo' earth's come to the place! Gien it bena the day o' judgment, troth it's no the day o' sma' things! I said. It was as gien a' the cheers and tables thegither war bein' routit oot o' the places, an' syne set back again, an' the tables turnt heels owerhead, an' a' the glaiss an' a' the plate for the denner knockit about as gien they had been sae money hailstones that warna wantit ony mair, but nicht jist lie whaur they fell. I couldna for the life o' me think what it nicht betoken, save an' excep' a general frenzy had seized upo' every man an' woman i' the hoose! I got up in a hurry: whatever was gaein' on, I wadna willingly gang withoot my share! An' jist as I opened my door, I heard the maister cry — What i' the name o' a' that's holy, says he, is the meanin' o' this! An' I ran till him oot o' the passage an' through the swing-door into the great corridor, an' says I, 'Deed sir, I was jist won'erin'! an' wi' yer leave, sir, I'll gang an' see, I said, gatherin' my shawl about me as weel as I could, to hide what was aneth it, or rather what wasna aneth it, for I hadna that muckle on. But, says he, No, no, you must not go; who knows what it may be! I'll go myself. They may be robbers, and the men fighting them. You stop where you are. Sayin' that, he was half way down the stair. I followed him as far as the top, and stood there, looking down and hearkening, and the noise still going on. But he could hardly have won the len'th o' the hall whan it stoppit a' at ance an' a'thegither. Ye may think what a din it maun hae been, whan I

tell ye the quiet that cam upo' the heels o't jist seemed to sting my twa lugs. The same moment I h'ard the maister cryin' til me to come doon. I ran, an' whan I reach'd the servan's ha whaur he stood jist inside the door, I glowered, for wad ye believe me, the place was as dacent and quiet as ony kirk-yard 'i the muinlicht ! There wasna a thing oot o' its place, nor an' air o' dust, nor the sma'est disorder to be seen ! A' the things luikit as gien they had sattlet themsel's to sleep as usual, an' had sleepit til we cam an' waukit them. The maister glowert at me, an' I glowert at the maister. But a' he said was — A false alarm, ye see, Rose ! An' what he thocht I canna tell, but wi'oot anither word we turn't, an' gaed up the stair again thegither.

“ Whan we war at the tap o' the stair, whaur a long passage ran awa' intil the dark afore's — they ca'd it the corridor — for the can'le the maister carried flangna licht half way to the en' o' 't, frae oot o' the mirk on a suddent cam to meet 's a rampaugin' an' a rattlin' like o' a score o' nowt rinnin' awa' wi' their iron tethers aboot their necks — sic a rattlin' o' iron chains as ye never h'ard ! an' a groanin' an' a gruntin' jist fearsome. Again we stood an' luikit at an' anither ; an' my word ! but noo the maister's face was enough to fricht a body o' itsel', lat alane the thing we h'ard an' saw naething to account for ! Gang awa' back to yer bed, Rose, he said ; this'll never do. And hoo are ye to help it, sir ? said I. That I cannot tell, answered he : but I wouldn't for the world your mistress heard it. I left her fast asleep, and I hope she'll sleep through it. Did you ever hear anything strange about the house before we came ?

Never, sir, said I, as sure as I stan' here shiverin' — for the nicht was i' the simmer, an' warm to that degree! an' yet I was shiverin' as gien I was i' the cauld fit o' a fever, an' my moo' wad hardly consent to mak the words I soucht to frame.

“ We stood that way for a minute or twa, an' there was naething mair, an' by degrees we grew a kin' o' ashamet, like as gien we war dootfu' we had h'ard onything: an' when he said to me gang to my bed a second time, I gaed to my bed, an' wasna lang upo' the road, for fear I wad hear something mair, an' intil my bed, an' my heid 'aneth the claes, an' lay trim'lin.' But there was nae mair o' 't that nicht, an' I wasna ower muckle owercome to fa' asleep.

“ I' the mornin' I tellt the hoosekeeper a' about it; but she heild her tongue in a manner that was, to say the least o' 't, varra strange to me. She didna laugh, not yet say the thing was nonsense, but she jist h'ard an' h'ard an' saidna a word. I thoct wi' mysel', is't possible she disna believe me. But I couldna mak that oot aither. Sae as she heild her tongue, I jist pu'd the bridle o' mine, an' vooed there should be never another word said by me till she spak hersel'. An' I wad sune hae had eneuch o' haudin' my tongue, but I hadna to haud it to onybody' but her; an' I cam to the conclusion that she was feart o' bein' speirt questions by them that had a richt to speir them, for that she had h'ard o' something afore, an' kenned mair nor she was at liberty to speak aboot.

“ But that was only the beginnin', an' little to what followed! for frae that nicht there was na ae nicht passed but some ane or twa disturbit; an' whiles wi' some it was past a' bidin'. The noises an' the rum'-

lin's, and abune a' the clankin' o' chains, that gaed on i' that hoose, an' the groans, an' the cries, an' whiles the whustlin', an' what was maist waur nor a', the launchin', was something dreidfu', an' ayont believin' to ony but them that was intil't. I sometimes think that maybe the terror o' 't maks it luik waur i' the recollection nor it was; but I canna keep my senses an' doobt there wasna something a'thegither by ord'nar' i' the affair. An' whan, or lang, it cam to the knowledge o' the lady, an' she was waukit up at night, an' h'ard the thing, whatever it was that made it a', an' syne whan the bairns was waukit up, an' aye the romage, noo i' this room, noo i' that, sae that the leevin' wad be cryin' as lood as the deid, though they could ill mak sic a din, it was beyond beirin', an' the maister made up his min' to bide nae langer, but to flit at ance, come o't what micht!

“For, as I oucht to hae tellt ye, he had written to the owner o' the hoose, that was my ain maister, for it was nae use sayin' onything mair to the agent, wha only lauch, an' declaret it maun be some o' his ain folk that was playin' tricks on him — which it angert him to hear, bin' as impossible as it was fause — sae wrote straucht awa' to his landlord, as I say; but, as he was travellin' aboot on the continent, he supposed either that the letter had not reached him, and never would reach him, or that he was shelterin' hissel' under the idea that they would think he had never had it, no wantin' to move in the matter. But the verra day he had made up his min' that nothing should make him spend another week in the house, for Monday nights were always the worst, there did come a letter from the gentleman, sayin' that only that same

hoor that he was writin' had he received the maister's letter : and he was sorry he had not had it before, but prayed him to put up with things till he got to him, and he would start at the farthest in two days more, and would set the thing right in less time than it would take to tell him what was amiss. A strange enough letter to be sure! Harper, that was their butler, told me he had read every word of it — as strange as anything else in the business! Perhaps we in the servants' hall would never have h'ard onything of all this, but that the servan's themsel's were a' declarin' that, if the family did not move, they must ; for not to mention the terrors o' the nicht, the want o' rest was like to ruin them altogether ; so when the master got a gleam of comfort, he felt bound by necessity to share it with the rest o' the hoosehold : an' that was hoo we were a' on the lookoot for the appearance o' oor promised deliverer, wha was sae cocksure o' settin' things richt again.

“Weel, at last, and that was in a verra few days, though they luikit lang to some i' that hoose, he appearit — a nice luikin' gentleman, wi' sae sweet a smile that it wasna hard to believe whatever he tellt ye. An' he had a licht airy w'y wi' him that was to us oppress't craturs, strangely comfortin', only it was ill to believe that he could really ken what had been a' this time goin' on i' the hoose, and treat it in that easy fashion! Hooever,— an' no, Mr. Grant, an' my lady, I hae to tell ye what the butler told me, for I wasna present to her for mysel'. Maybe he wouldn't have told me, but that he wasn't an old man, though twice my age, and seemt to have taken a likin' to me, though it never came to anything ; and as I was

always ceevil to any person that was ceevil to me, and never went farther than was becomin', he made me the return of tellin' me what he knew.

"The young gentleman, the landlord, I mean, was to stop to lunch with the master, and in the meantime would have a glass of wine and a biscuit; and pulin' a bunch of keys out of his pocket, told Mr. Harper to take a certain one and go to *his* wine-cellar, and bring up a bottle from a certain bin. Harper took the key and was just going out of the room, when he heard the visitor—though in truth he was more at home there than any of us—heard him say, I'll tell you what you've been doing, sir, and you'll tell me whether I'm not right! Hearin' that, the butler drew the door to, but made no haste to leave it, and so heard the rest of the conversation between the two gentlemen. I'll tell you what you've been doin'! says he. Didn't you find a man's head—a skull I mean, upon the premises? Well, yes, I believe we did, when I think of it, says the master; for my butler—and there was the butler outside a listenin' to the whole tale!—my butler came to me sayin', Look here, sir! this is what I found in a little box in the cellar, close by the door of the wine cellar! It's a skull. Oh, said I—it was the master that was speakin',—it'll be some medical student in the family has brought it to the house! So he asked me what he had better do with it.—And you told him, interrupted the gentleman, to bury it!—I did, it seemed the proper thing to do. I hadn't a doubt of it, said the gentleman; that is the cause of all the disturbance. That? says the master. That, and nothing else! answers the gentleman.

“ And with that, as Harper confessed when he told me, there came over him such a horror that he daured nae langer stan’ at the door, but for goin’ down to the cellar to fetch the bottle of wine that was merely beyond his human faculty. I met him on the stair as white as a sheet, an’ ready to drop. What’s the matter, Mr. Harper? said I, and he told me all about it. Come along, I said, we’ll go to the cellar together! It’s broad daylight, and there’s nothing to hurt us. So we went down. There, that’s the box the horrid thing was lyin’ in! said he, as he came oot o’ the wine-cellar. An’ wi that thar cam a groan like oot o’ the ground at our feet, and we both h’ard it, and stood shakin’ and dumb for a while, grippin’ one another. I’m sure I don’t know what in the name o’ heaven it can all mean! said he, but that was after he had got the wine, and we were on the way up again. Did ye show’t ony disrespect? said I. Nō, said he; I buried it, as I would anything else that had to be putten out of sight.

“ And so we was talkin’ together, when there cam a great ringin’ at the bell, and said he, they’re won’erin’ what’s come o’ me an’ their wine, an’ well they may! I maun run. As soon as he entered the room, Whaur did ye bury the heid ye tuk frae the cellar? said his master to him, and saidna a word as to hoo he had been sae lang gane for the wine. I buried it in the garden, said he. I hope you know the spot, said the strange gentleman. Yes, sir, I do, said Harper. Then come and show me, said he. So all three of them went together, and got a spade as they went, from the tool house. Luckily the poor man was able to show them at once the very spot, and the gentleman

dug up the skull with his own hands, careful not to touch it with the spade, and brought it back with him in his hand to the house, knocking the earth off it with his rough travelling gloves. But when Harper looked to be told to take it back to the place where he found it, and trembled at the thought, and wondered how he was to get hold of me again and nobody the wiser, for he did not want to show frightened in the day time, to his surprise an' no' sma' pleesur the gentleman set the skull on the chimney-piece; and as lunch had been laid i' the meantime, Mr. Haywood haein' need to catch the neist train, and he waitit upo' them, he h'ard the whole story. I suppose they thocht it better he should hear, an' tell the rest, sae the sooner to forget the terrors we had come throu'.

“Said the gentleman, Now you'll have no more trouble. If you do, write to me, to the care o' so an' so, an' I'll release you from your obligation. But allow me to remark that you brought it on yourself by interfering, I can't exactly say with my property, but with the property of another who knows how to defend his own without appeal to any law. It was the burying of that skull that caused all your annoyance. But I always thought, said the master, that the dead preferred and desired to have their bones buried. The ghosts of the dead, according to Cocker, would refuse to lie quiet until their bodies were properly buried. You may say what you please, answered Mr. Heywood, and I cannot pretend to explain the thing; I only know that when that head is buried, these disagreeables always begin. Then the head is in the way of being buried and dug up again? said the mas-

ter. I will tell you the whole story if you like, answered his landlord. I would gladly hear it, says he. I should like to see the daylight o' common sense cast upon the affair. That I cannot promise you, he answered; but the story, as it has been handed down in our family, you shall hear. You may be sure, my leddy, Harper was wide awake to hear all he could, that he might tell it again to the hall.

“Somewhere about a hundred and fifty years ago or so, he began, one cold, stormy night, there came to the hall door a poor pedlar — a travelling merchant, you know, my leddy, with his pack on his back, and would fain have parted with some of his goods to the folk of the hall. The butler who must have been rather a rough sort of man, told him they wanted nothing he could give them, and he might go about his business. But the man, who had something obstinate in him I daur say, an' was, it may weel be, as anxious to get under shelter, hopin' it might be for the night, seein' it was gurlly, as to sell his goods, keepit on beggin'—an' would he no see whether some o' the women-folk might na be weel wullin' to buy o' him! At last the butler, oot o' a' patience wi' the man, ga'e him a great shove awa' frae the door, so that the poor man fell down the steps, an' bangt the door to nor ever lookit to see whether the man got up again or no. I' the mornin' the pedlar was found lyin' deid in a little wood or shaw, no far frae the hoose. An' up got the cry, an' what did they say but that the butler had murdert him, an' he was ta'en up and tried for't. Whether the man was not liked in the neighborhood, I cannot tell, said the gentleman, but the cry was against him, and things went the wrong

way for him though no one about the house believed he had done the deed, more than he might have caused his death by pushing him down the steps. But even that he could hardly have intended, and very likely the man may have been weak or ill, an' yet would not have fallen but for the weicht o' his pack on his back. Still, efter an' a'—'n it's mysel' that's sayin' this, no the gentleman, my lady—in a part o' the country like that gey an' lanely, it was not a nicht to turn a fellow creature oot in. The butler was at the same time an old an' trusty servant, and his master was greatly concernt about the thing.

“It is impossible at this time o' day, said the gentleman, to understan' hoo such a thing could be—in the total abstinence o' direc' evidence, but the short and the weary lang o' 't was, that the man was hang't, an' hung in irons for the deed. An' noo ye may be thinkin' the ghost o' the puir pedlar began to haunt the hoose; but naething of the kin'! There was nae disturbance o' that, or ony ither sort. The man was deid and buried, whaever did or didna kill him, an' the body o' him that was said to hae killed him hung danglin' in the win'. But whatever the hoosehold may hae thocht or had i' their herts about it, the hert o' the man's maister was sair, an' he couldna help aye thinkin' that maybe he was to blame, an' micht hae done something mair nor he thocht o' a' the time, to get the puir man aff; for he was absolutely sure that, hooever rough he micht hae been, an' hooever he micht hae been the cause o' death to the troublesome man, he hadna meant to kill him: it was, in pairt at least, an accident, an' he thought it hard lines. His maister was an auld man, near han' auchty, and tuik things the

mair seriously, I daur say, that he wasna' that far frae the grave they had sent the puir butler til afore his time — gien that could be said o' ane wha's only grave was that o' the weather-cock. An' aye he tuik himsel' to task as to whether he ouchtna to hae done something mair — gane to the king maybe, for he couldna bide the thought o' the puir man, that had waitit upon him sae lang an' faithfu' hingin' an' swingin' up there, an' the flesh drappin' aff the banes o' 'im an' still the banes hingin' there, an' swingin', an' creakin' an' cryin' was sair upo' the auld man.

“ But the time passed, and I kenna hoo lang or hoo short it may tak for a body in sic a position to come asunder, but at last the banes began to drap, an' as they drappit, there they lay at the fut o' the gallows, for naebody caret to meddle wi' them ; an' whan that cam to the knowledge o' the auld gentleman, he sent his fowk to gather them up an' bury them oot o' sicht. An' what was left o' the body, the upper pairt, hauden thegither wi' the irons, maybe — I kenna weel hoo, hung an' swung there still, in every win' that blew. But at last, oot o' sorrow an' respec' for the deid, hooever he dee'd, his auld maister sent quaietly ae dark nicht, an' had the lave o' the banes taen doon an' laid i' the earth. An' frae that moment, would ye think it, there was no peace i' the hoose ! A clankin' o' chains got up, an' a howlin' an' a compleenin', a creakin' like i' the win' — an' sic a stramash a' thegither, that the hoose was no fit to be leevit in whiles, though it was sometimes waur nor ither times, an' some thocht it had to do wi' the airt the win' blew : aboot that I ken naething. But it gaed on like that for months, maybe years — Mr. Harper wasna sure

hoo long the gentleman said — till the auld man maist wished himsel' in o' the grave an' oot o' the trouble. But at last ae day cam anither auld man to see him — no sae auld as himsel' but ane he had kenned whan they war at college thegither; an' this was a man that had travelled greatly, an' was weel learnt in a heap o' things ordinary fowk, that gies themsel's to the lan' an' the growin' o' corn an' beasts, are no likely to ken muckle aboot. He saw his auld freen was in trouble, an' didna carry his age calm-like as was nat'ral, an' sae speirt him what was the matter; an' he told him the whole story, for it was nae won'er, whan the din gat up, especially wi' the clankin' o' chains intil 't an' i' the dark days o' superstition, that they should connec' the tane wi' the tither — the hangin' wi' the bangin'. Weel, said the learnt man, whan he had h'ard a', gien ye'll tak my advice, ye'll jist sen' an' howk up that hied again, an tak' it intil the hoose wi' ye, an' lat it bide there whaur it was used sae lang to be; do that, an' it's my opinion ye'll hear nae mair o' sic unruly gangin's on.

“The auld gentleman tuik the advice, kenin' no better, an' but it was the richt advice, for frae that moment the rumor was ower, an' they had nae mair o' 't. They laid the heid in a decent bit box i' the cellar, an' there it remaint, well content there to abide the day o' that jeedgment that'll set mony anither jeedgment to the richt aboot; though what pleesur could be intil that celler mair nor a hole i' the earth, is a thing no for me to say! So wi' that generation there was nae mair trouble. But i' the coorse o' time there cam first ane an' syne anither, wha forgot, maybe lauch at the haill affair an' didna believe a

word o' the same. But they're but fules that gang again' the experience o' their forbears! What wad ye hae but they wad bury the heid! An' what wad come o' that but an auld dismay het up again! Up gat the din, the rampaugin', the clankin' an' a' jist as ill as ever! But whan, frichtet at the consequences o' their folly, they acknowledged the property o' the ghaist in his ain head, and tuik it oot o' the earth an' intil the hoose again, a' was quaiet directly — quaiet as hert could desire. Sae that was the story!

“An' whan the lunch was over, an' Mr. Harper was thinkin' the moment come whan they would order him to tak the heid, him that was 'maist trimlin' at the thocht o' touchin' 't, an' lay't whaur it sae aften was whan it had a sowl intil 't, the gentleman got up, an' says he til him, Be so good, says he, as fetch me my hat-box from the hall. The butler went and got it as desired, and the gentleman took an unlocked it. But never a hat was there intil 't! an' roon' he turnt whaur he stood, an' up he tuik the skull, neither as gien he lo'ed it, nor feared it, as what reason had he to do either? An' he han'let neither ouchly, nor with that muckle care, but intil the hat-box it gaed, willy, nilly, an' the lid was shudden doon upo' 't, an' the key was turnt i' the lock o' the same; an' as gien he wad mak the thing richt sure o' no bein' puttin' ony mair whaur it had sic an objection to gang, up he tuiks in his han' the hat-box an' the contrairy heid i' the inside o' 't an' awa' wi' him on his travels, here an' there ower the face o' the warl: he was on his w'y to Spain ony gait! an we saw nae mair o' him nor the heid, nor h'ard ever a soun' mair o' clankin' nor ony ither unholy din. An' that's trowth, mak o' 't what ye like!”

Mrs. Brooks was silent, and for some time not a word was spoken by either of the listeners. At last Donal spoke.

“It is a strange story, Mrs. Brooks,” he said, “and the stranger that it would make us believe some of the inhabitants of the other world remain at least as silly as when they left this one. That is a terribly dreary thought with regard to a large proportion of the human race.”

“I canna say naething anent that, sir,” answered Mrs. Brooks; “I’m no accountable for what’s to be drawn frae my ower true tale; an’ doobtless, sir, ye ken far better nor me—but whaur ye sae mony folk draw oot a lang life here, and never ae sensible thing, that they could help, done or said, what for should ye won’er that noo an’ than ane i’ the ither warl shaws himsel’ siclike. Whan ye consider the heap o’ folk that dees, and how many more there must be in the ither world than in this, I confess for my part I wonder more that we are left at peace at all, and that they comena swarmin’ about us i’ the nicht, like black doos. Ye’ll maybe say they canna, an’ ye’ll maybe say they come; but sae lang as they plague me nae waur nor oor freen’ upo’ the tither side o’ the wa’, I canna say I care that muckle. But I think whiles hoo the ghaists maun lauch at them that lauchs as gien there were nae sic cratur’s i’ the warl’. For my part I neither fear them nor seek til them: I’ll be ane mysel’ afore lang! only I wad wass to gang in amo’ better behavet anes nor them that gangs about plaguin’ folk.”

“You speak the best of sense,” said Donal; but I *should* like to understand why the poor hanged fellow

should have such an objection to having his skull laid in the ground! Why has he such a fancy after his old bones? Could he have been so closely associated with them still that he could not do without the plenty of fresh air they got him used to as they hung on the gallows! And then it was only his head he cared about having above ground! It is quite bewildering! We can't believe that our very bones rise again — even if Paul hadn't told us the contrary! Why should the dead haunt their bones as if to make sure of having their own again?"

"But," said Mrs. Brooks, "beggin' yer pardon, sir, hoo do ye ken what they ken? Ye may ken better, but maybe they dinna; for haena ye jist allooed that sic conduc' as I hae been describin' to ye can be naething but foolish, whither done i' the streets by rowdy laddies, or i' the hoose by cratur's ye canna see. *They* may think they'll want their banes by an' by though ye ken better; an' whatever you wise folk may think the noo, ye ken it's no that lang sin' a' body, ay, the best o' folk, thocht the same; an' there's no a' doobt they a' did at the time that man was hangt."

"But wh' his head more than the rest of his bones?"

"Weel, sir, I'm thinkin' a' ghaist, ghaist though he be, canna surely be i' twa places at ance; sae he couldna weel luik efter a' his banes when they war dividit an' separate; but, kennin' that, whan he was alive, the heid seemed somehoo o' the first consequence, he nicht weel think he wad stick by that, an' direc' a' his energy to keep at least an e'e upo' 't. An' stickin' by 't sae lang, he was the less wullin' to

lose sicht o't. Ye see it canna be sae mony ghaists that hae the chance o' seein' sae muckle o' their banes, efter they're deid, as this ane had; it's nae sae mony o' them hae the preevilege o' luiking upo' the body belongin' to them as it swings an' sways, in-feckin' the air, an' sayin' to themsel's, yon's mine! An' this same ghaist that was sae fond o' his ain auld carcass, an' sae sorry for't, heukit up there in disgrace an' him free, micht weel hae a cat-like nature for stickin' to places too, an' sae maybe likit the cellar whaur lay the wine, as in ither cases we hae h'ard o' ghaists hauntin' the places whaur used to be their gowd, and ithers the places whaur their warst sins war committit. Mony's the story I could tell you that hoosekeeper, honest woman, telled to me; for what had come an' gane set her openin' oot her pack, an' I believe I could haud ye there a' the nicht tellin' ye ane after anither o' them. But it's time to gang to oor beds."

"Well, I won't ask you for any more to-night," said Lady Arctura; "but *we* must now tell you something! Only *you* must tell nobody, just yet; there are reasons. Mr. Grant has found the lost room!"

For a few moments Mrs. Brooks said nothing. She neither paled nor looked incredulous; her face was simply fixed and still, as if she were thinking of something to put alongside of what was now told her. At last,

"Then there aye was sic a place!" she said. "I was aye o' the min', an' mony a time thocht I would luik for't to please mysel'; but the richt time never cam. Sic a place bein', it's sma' won'er we should

hear soon's an raps an' siclike about the hoose!"

"You will not think differently when we tell you what we found in it," said Arctura. "That was why I asked you to let us come to supper with you: I was afraid to go to bed for thinking about it."

"*You've* been into it, my lady! — And what did you see?" asked Mrs. Brooks with growing eyes.

"It is the old chapel of the house! I have heard there is mention made of it in some of the old papers in the iron chest. No one, I suppose, ever dreamed that the room they told such stories of could be the chapel! Yet what should we find there but a bed! And in the bed not the skeleton but the dust of a woman! and on the altar lay another dust, that of a very little child!"

"The Lord be about us! an' atween's an' harm!" cried the housekeeper, her well-seasoned composure giving way at last; "ye saw that wi' yer ain e'en, my lady! Mr. Grant! hoo could ye lat her leddyship see sic things! I thought ye wad hae had mair sense!"

"My lady has more sense than you seem to think, Mrs. Brooks!" returned Donal laughing a little. "I had no right to go without her ladyship if she wanted to go."

"That's varra true; but eh, my bonny dairn, sic sights is no for you!"

"I ought to know what is in my own house!" said Arctura with a little involuntary shudder. "But I shall feel more comfortable now you know too. — Mr. Grant would like to have your advice as to what we ought to do with the — the remains. — You'll come and see the place, Mrs. Brooks?"

“Yes, surely ; when you please, my lady — but not to-night — you do not mean to-night?”

“No, certainly! Not to-night.— I wonder if any of the noises we hear in this house are made by ghosts wanting to let you know their bodies are *not* buried yet! There are some that want to be buried, I suppose, though here and there one may not!”

“I wouldna wonder!” answered Mrs. Brooks thoughtfully.

“What would you have us do with the dust?” asked Donal.

“I would have you bury it as soon as possible.”

“That is certainly the natural thing! The human body is not in any case to be treated as less than sacred,” said Donal.

“Whan I was in Englan’,” said the housekeeper thoughtfully, “I used to hear them say a heap about bein’ buried in consecrated gr’un’, but to my min’ I aye thought it was the bodies o’ God’s handiwork that consecrated the gr’un’, no the bishop. Whaur the Lord lays doon what he has done wi’, that wad aye be a secret place to me. I daursay Moses, whan he cam upo’ ’t again i’ the desert, luikit upo’ the ground whaur stood the burnin’ bus, as a sacred place though the fire was ever sae lang oot o’ t: thinkna ye, Mr. Grant?”

“I do,” answered Donal; “but I think there’s a better way of thinking still, to which that may be the stepping-stone: we cannot learn everything at once! I do not believe the Lord Jesus thought one spot on the face of the earth more holy than another: every dust of it was his father’s, neither more nor less, and existing only by the thought of that father. I think

that is what we shall come to. The chapel down there has been terribly desecrated by the cruelty of man, but not by the presence there of the dead, left to moulder away there for centuries! — Do you think we should bury them where they lie, or carry them out, and bury them in the garden or the church-yard? ”

“ I’ll turn the thing ower in my min’, sir. I wadna wullin’ly hae a heap o’ clash i’ the countryside about it. Efter an’ a’ they war yer ain forbears, my leddy ; an’ sic things are as weel forgotten ; for ye ken, my lady, there’s a gay lot o’ ill stories about the hoose i’ the auld time ! An’ syne what would the earl say ? It micht upset him mair nor a bit. But, as I say. I’ll consider o’ ’t.”

So the thing was left for the meantime. Donal accompanied the two to the door of their chamber, and then betook himself to the high places of the castle, where more than once, in what remained of the night, he awoke fancying he heard the sounds of the ghost-music sounding its coronach over the strange bier down below.

CHAPTER XXX.

AN UNSOUGHT-FOR INTERVIEW.

PAPA is very ill to-day, Simmons tells me," said Davie, as soon as Donal entered the room in the morning. "He says he has never seen him so ill. Oh, Mr. Grant, I hope he is not going to die!"

"I hope not," returned Donal, not very sure, when he thought about it, what he had meant when he said it, for he could not think there was hope of his getting better on this side of some awful doom, and why then should he hope he was to go on living.

"I wish you would talk to him as you do to me, Mr. Grant!" resumed Davie, who, like many another, was ready to think what had been good for himself must be good for any and everybody else.

"I should like, if he wished it," replied Donal, "but if he did not, of course I could not, neither would it be of any use. Do you think it would, Davie?"

"Oh, sir, I don't know! I only wish he would listen to what you could tell him!"

The boy may have dropped something to that end in his father's hearing — I do not know; he was with him, and sat by his bedside for a good while between school hours that day, but it is difficult to believe that his father would have listened to any such wish expressed by him. He may however have dropped

some word that had set his father thinking; for however helpless in any high sense, the earl's mind was far indeed from being inactive. However this may be, in the afternoon the butler brought a message to Donal that his lordship would be glad to see him when school was over and Donal obeyed the summons.

He found the earl looking very weak, but more like a live man, he thought, than he had seen him. He pointed to a seat, and when Donal had taken it, began to talk in a way that considerably astonished him.

“Mr. Grant,” he began, with not a little formality, “I have known you long enough to know you really, or at least to believe I do. I find myself, partly from the peculiarity of my position” — “What does he mean?” thought Donal — “partly from the strange state of my health, and also from the fact that my views do not coincide with those of the leading men in the church of Scotland.—I was brought up in the Episcopal Church, and there is no clergyman of my own persuasion within reach of the castle.—I find myself, I say, for all these reasons, desirous of some conversation with you upon certain matters, more perhaps for the sake of identifying my own opinions than with the hope of receiving from you an enlightenment which it would be unreasonable to look for from one of your age, or youth rather.”

Donal held his peace; he had nothing to say; not merely because nothing came to him but because the very power of speech seemed taken from him. The cause of this mental obstruction seemed to himself his utter want of confidence in the man who

spoke ; and certainly nothing can, nothing ought to be such a quencher of speech as lack of faith. But apparently the earl had no suspicion of his distrust, for he went on as if with never a doubt of his listener's being ready to take any position towards him he might require of him.

“ I have long been troubled,” continued his lordship, “ as to a question of which one might think the world would by this time be weary, but which yet has, and always will have, extraordinary fascinations for minds of a certain sort — of which, I need hardly say, my own is one. The question of the freedom of the will : — how far is the will free ? or how far can it be said to be free, consistently with the notion of a God over all.”

Here he paused, and again Donal sat silent — so long, silent that his lordship opened the eyes which the better to enjoy the process of sentence-making he had kept shut as he spoke, and half turned his head towards him. Donal seemed to read on his face the doubt, whether he had ever really seen him by his bedside, or it might not have been one of the many visions he was so often unable to distinguish from realities. But he seemed re-assured by the glance.

“ I cannot, of course, expect from you such an exhaustive and formed opinion as I might from an older man who had made metaphysics his business, and acquainted himself with all that had been thought upon the subject — in particular by the schoolmen. At the same time I do know from what Davie has let fall, that you must have expended an amount of thought on these matters greater than usual in a man of your years.”

He talked in a quiet straight-on way, almost without inflection, and with his eye closed, as if he were reading a book inside him.

"I have had a good deal," he went on, "to shake my belief in the common ideas on these points. Do *you* really believe there is such a thing as free will?" He ceased, awaiting the answer which Donal felt far from prepared to give him.

"My lord," said Donal at length, "what I think or do not think, on the point, I do not feel at all capable, on a moment's notice, of setting forth; neither do I think, however unavoidable such discussions must sometimes be in the forum of one's own thoughts, that they are a profitable subject of open discussion between men. I think difficult questions of the sort, if they are to be treated at all between man and man, and not between God and man only, had better be treated in print, where what is said is at least a little fixed, and can with an eye-glance be brought again before the mind. But not so either do I think they can be discussed to any profit."

"What do you mean, Mr. Grant? Surely these things are of the very first importance to humanity!"

"I grant it, my lord, if by *humanity* you mean the human individual. But my meaning is, that there are many questions, and this is one of them, that cannot be answered but in putting them to the proof of action."

"You speak riddles!"

"I will endeavor to speak as directly to the point as a man can! I believe such questions can be answered only by the moral nature, which first and almost only they concern; and the only pure exer-

cise of the moral nature is action, not discussion."

"Do I not then," said his lordship, with the faintest shadow of indignation in his tone, "bring my moral nature to bear on a question when I consider it from the highest grounds of duty?"

"No, my lord," answered Donal, with decision; "you bring nothing but your intellectual nature to bear on it so. The moral nature, I repeat, operates only in action. To come to the absolute point in hand, the sole way for a man to know whether he has freedom of will or not: is to put that will in operation — to do something he ought to do. He may strive to acquaint himself with all the facts concerning will, and spend himself imagining its mode of working; yet all the time never knows whether he has a will or not."

"But how am I to know how to put in operation, if I do not know whether I have any freedom of will or not?"

"Just by being alive, my lord; by setting yourself to do the next thing you know you ought to do, or abstaining from the next thing you are tempted to, but know you ought not to do. It sounds childish, I know, and most people will set it aside as something that can be taken up any time, or at least postponed till questions are settled which never can be settled for them until they take just this divinely childish way of doing it. That is the only way in which a man *can* know whether he has got a free will or not."

"Suppose he should find that he had not, for that he could not do what he wished?"

"What he ought, I said, my lord."

"Well, what he ought," said the earl.

“That he could not find proved. He might doubt it the more, but the only thing he could prove, would be that he had, or might have, a free will.”

“Then where would be the satisfaction, if he *could* only prove the one thing and not the other?”

“The truth alone can be proved, my lord. To a man that wanted to prove he had no freedom of will there would come as little satisfaction from the test as he deserved to find — and the less the more honest he was; but to the man anxious about the dignity of the nature given him, there would come in time every sort of needful satisfaction in the progress of his obedience.”

“But how can there be free will where the first thing demanded is obedience?”

“There is no free will save in resisting what one would like, and doing what the Truth would have him do.”

“That’s a dreary doctrine!”

“My lord, I have spent no little time and thought on the subject, after the action, that is, of which I speak, and the result is some sort of practical clearness to myself; but I should not care to make it clear, if even I could, to another, in any way but by persuading that other to arrive at the same conviction by the same path — the only path by which it could be arrived at, — namely, once more, the doing of the thing that was required of him.”

“Required of him by what?”

“I would rather you asked, required of him by *whom*; but I will answer you: by any one, or anything, or any thought, that bears the word required along with it — anything that carries a shadow of right in its

demand. If a man does not do the thing which the very notion of a free will requires, what in earth, heaven, or hell, would be the use of his knowing all about the will, its freedom or its slavery, from alpha to omega? But it is impossible he should know anything."

"You are a bold preacher for a youth!" said the earl. "But suppose now that a man was unconscious of the smallest ability to do anything that was required of him?"

"Then I should say there was but the more need he should do the thing without being conscious of the power."

"That is nonsense."

"If it be nonsense, the nonsense lies in the supposition that a man can be conscious of not possessing a power; he can only be not conscious of possessing it and that is a very different thing. How is a power to be known but by being a power, and how is it to be a power, but in its own exercise of itself? There is more in man than he can be at any given moment conscious of; there is life, the power of the eternal behind him, which only in action can he make his own, therefore which only in action, which is almost but another name for obedience, can he become conscious of, seeing that only then it is actually his."

"You are splitting a hair!"

"If the only way into life lies through the middle of what you call a hair — yes, even if it looks but a hair to you, what are you to do but split it. Only the fact is it is a world in size, though you, seeing but the knife-edge of it, take it for a hair."

"Come, come, now! How does all this apply to

one like me? A man who would really like to make up his mind about the thing, and is not at the moment aware of any very pressing duty that he is required or neglecting to do?"

"But is your lordship not aware of some not very pressing duty that you are neglecting? Some duties only need to be acknowledged by the smallest amount of action, to become paramount in their demands upon us."

"That is the worst of it!" half muttered the earl. "That is why I would avoid such acknowledgement! Who knows where it might carry me, or what it might not go on to demand of me?"

He spoke like one who did not know he spoke aloud.

"Yes, my lord," said Donal, "that is how most men treat the most important things! The devil would blind us to get a good hold of us!"

"Bah!" said his lordship, glad of the turn to leave the gath of the conversation; "you don't mean to say you believe in that legendary personage?"

"He who does what the devil would have him do, is the man who believes in him, not he who does not care whether he is or not, so long as he does nothing to his mind. But be sure of this, that, if there be such a one as the devil, he will be the last to be anxious to convince men of his existence till he has got them in his power. There is no end of truth in the old legends of men selling their souls to the devil. But he is a subject I do not care to discuss; for he is not very interesting to me.—I am sure, however," added Donal fearful of failing in his duty, "if your lordship would but set yourself to get over the habit of de-

pending so much on medicine, you would not be long in finding out that you had a free will."

His lordship scowled like a thunder-cloud.

"I am certain, my lord," "that one question asked of the will will bring an answer, where a thousand asked of the intellect, will bring nothing satisfactory."

"I did not send for you to act the part of father confessor, Mr. Grant," said his lordship in a tone from which Donal could not well judge the feeling behind it; "but as you have taken the office, I may as well let you keep it; that matter of my medical treatment of myself is just that which has brought me into my present difficulty. It would be too long a story to tell you how, like poor Coleridge, I was led from one degree to another; but surely you will allow the desire to escape from pain to be as natural an instinct as any other; from that, and partly to enable me to survive the consequence of much thoughtlessness in my behavior to others, I have become by degrees far too dependent upon the use of drugs. And now, when, from certain symptoms, I have reason to fear a change of some kind not far off — I do not of course mean to-morrow, or next year, but somewhere nearer than it was this time, I won't say last year, but say ten years ago — why, then, one begins to think about certain things one has been too ready to forget. I suppose, however, if a man should through the operation of such things upon the tissue of his brain, have no will left, and if there be another world, which I for one am not altogether prepared to deny, and if also the will be a natural possession of the human being, then it must return to him the moment he is set free from the body."

“ My lord, I would not have you count too much upon that. We know very little about these things ; but what if the brain be just the means of giving the opportunity for the action which is to result in freedom ? What if there should, without the brain, be no means of working out the liberty we need ? What if we are here like birds in a cage, with wings able to fly about the cage ; and what if, when we are dead, we shall indeed be out of the cage ; but without wings, having never made use of them while we had them ? Just think for a moment what we should be without the senses.”

“ But of course we shall be able to see and hear, else where is the use of believing in another world ? ”

“ I suspect, my lord, the other world does not need our believing in it to make a fact of it. But if a man were never to teach his soul to see, if he were obstinately to close his eyes upon this, and look at nothing all the time he was in it, I should be very doubtful whether the mere fact of going dead, would make him see. Never having learned to see, the sense of seeing in the soul, correspondent to and higher than that of the body, never having been developed, how should it expand and empower itself by mere deliverance from the one best schoolmaster to whom it would give no heed ? The senses here are, I suspect, only as the husk under which is ripening the deeper, keener, better senses belonging to the next stage of our life ; and so, my lord, I cannot think that, if the will has not been developed here through the means and occasions given it, the mere passing into another condition should set it free. For freedom is the unclosing of the idea which lies at our root, the vital

power of our existence. The rose is the freedom of the rose-tree. I should think, having lost his brain, and got nothing instead, he would find himself a mere centre of unanswerable questions."

"You go too far for me," said his lordship, looking a little uncomfortable, as if there might be something in what the fellow said, "but I think it almost time for me to try and break myself a little of the habit. By degrees one night — you know — eh?"

"I have little faith in doing things by degrees, my lord — except such indeed as by their very nature cannot be done at once. It is true a bad habit can only be contracted by degrees, and I will not say, because I do not know, whether any one has ever cured himself of one by degrees, but it cannot be the best way. What is bad ought to be got rid of at once."

"Ah, but you know that might cost you your life!"

"What of that, my lord? Life, the life you mean, is not the first thing."

"Not the first thing! Why, the Bible says, 'All that a man hath will he give for his life!'"

"Yes; that is in the Bible; but who said it?"

"What does it matter who said it?"

"Much always; everything sometimes."

"Who said it then?"

"The devil."

"The devil he did! And who ought to know better, I should like to ask!"

Every man ought to know better. And besides, it is not what a man will or will not do, but what a man ought or ought not to do!"

"Ah, there you have me, I suppose! But there are some things so damned difficult, that a man must

be very sure of the danger he is in before he can bring himself to do them ! ”

“ That may be, my lord ; and in the present case your lordship must know that it is not the health alone these drugs undermine, but the moral nature as well ! ”

“ I know it ; and that therefore I cannot be counted guilty of many things I have done, seeing they were done under the influence of these hellish concoctions. It was not I, but these things working on my brain, and making me see things for the time in an altogether false light. This will be considered when I come to be judged — if there be in truth a day of judgment.”

“ One thing I am sure of,” said Donal, “ that your lordship, as well as every man, will have fair play. But there is this to be considered ; at first, if you did not know what you were about, you might not be much to blame, though it is impossible to say when there may not be a glimmer of light left ; but afterwards, when you knew that you were putting yourself in danger of doing you did not know what, you must have been as much to blame as if you had made a Frankenstein-demon, and turned him loose on the earth, knowing you would not be in the least able to control him.”

“ And is not that what the God you believe in does every day ? ”

“ My lord, the God I believe in has *not* lost his control over either of us.”

“ Then let him set the thing right ! Why should we have to toil to draw his plough with but one horse where there ought to be four ? ”

“ He will see to it, my lord ; do not fear — though it will probably be in a way your lordship will hardly like. He is compelled to do terrible things sometimes.”

“ What should compel him ? ”

“ The love that is in him, the love that he is, towards us who would have our own way to the ruin of everything he cares for ! ”

Then the spirit awoke in Donal, or came upon him, and he spoke.

“ My lord,” he said, “ if you would ever again be able to thank God, if there be one in the other world to whom you would go, if you would make up for any wrong you have ever done, if you would ever feel in your soul oncé more the innocence of a child, if you care to call God your father, and Jesus Christ your brother, if you would fall asleep in peace and wake to a new life, I conjure you to resist the devil, to give up the evil habit that is dragging you lower and lower every hour. It will be very hard, I know ! Anything I can do, by watching with you night and day, and giving myself to your help, I am ready for. I will do all a man can do to deliver you from the weariness that must come over you in the endeavor. I will give my life to assist you, and count myself honored, believing I shall then have lived a life worth living. Resolve, my lord — in God’s name resolve at once to be free. Then will you know that you have a free will, because your will will have made itself free by doing the will of God against all disinclination of your own. It will be a glorious victory, and will at once set you high on the hill whose peak is the throne of God.”

“I will begin to-morrow,” said the earl, with a strange look in his eyes; “but now,” he went on, “you must leave me. I need solitude to strengthen my resolve. Come to me again to-morrow. I am weary now, and must rest a while. Send Simmons.”

Donal was nowise misled by the easy consent he had gained, but he could not desire to prolong the interview. He rose and turned to the door. But in the act of shutting it behind him, something, he did not know what, made him turn again: the earl was leaning over the little table by his bedside, and pouring something from a bottle into a glass. Donal stood transfixed. The earl turned and saw him, cast on him a look of almost demoniacal hate, and putting the glass to his lips, drank off the contents. There was nothing to be said or done, and as the earl threw himself back on his pillow, Donal shut the door—not so softly as he had intended, for he was agitated: a loud curse at the noise he had made came after him. He went down the stair with a sense, not of failure only, but of exhaustion such as he had never before felt—not even after begging in vain for love that could not be his.

He had left Davie to be busy till he should return: school hours were over, but the boy was seated where he had left him, still working. Donal felt as if he had just come from the presence of the damned, and at sight of the boy almost burst into tears. A moment after, Arctura, who had come to school in the morning instead of the afternoon, and had since been out, came into the room: it was as if the roof of hell had given way, and the blue sky of the eternal came peering in at the ruined vault.

“I have been to call upon Sophia,” she said.

“I am glad to hear it,” said Donal, hardly knowing why he said it, except that any news from an outer world of yet unruined humanity was welcome as news of summer to dwellers in a land of ice.

“Yes,” said Arctura, “I am able to go and see her now, because I am no longer the least afraid of her — partly, I think, because I no longer care very much what she thinks of me — her power over me is gone.”

“And will never return,” said Donal, “so long as you keep close to the master and his will. Then you need no human being to set you right, and will allow no human being to set you wrong; then you will need neither friend nor priest nor Church, though they may all help you. I am very glad for something tells me I shall not be long in this place.”

Arctura dropped on a chair; she had turned pale as before she had been rosy! But ere he could speak, striving to cover her emotion, she said in a low voice that did not sound like her own,

“Has anything fresh happened. Surely you will not leave me while things are — I thought — I thought — What is it?”

She could not proceed.

“I know of nothing,” Donal hastened to assure her, “and you may be certain it will not be of my own choice to leave you! It is only a feeling I have: I believe I am out of spirits.”

“I never saw you so before:” said Arctura. “I hope you are not going to be ill.”

“Oh, no! I will tell you all about it some day, but I cannot now. There is nothing altered yet. All

is in God's hands and we shall see in a day or two perhaps."

Arctura did not seem satisfied. She looked anxiously at Donal, but did not venture to ask him any question more. She had come with the proposal that, before she put off her bonnet, they should all three have a turn in the park. Donal's gloom soon wore off, and that afternoon's ramble, coming into the midst of such strange and dreary things, often returned to him in after years as a foretaste of heaven.

CHAPTER XXXI.

LORD MORVEN.

THERE are men of inactive natures who cannot even enjoy seeing activity around them : men with schemes and desires are in their presence intrusive. Their existence is a sleepy lake which would not be troubled with the wind of far-off labor. But such was not Lord Morven by nature. He had led in his youthful years indeed what might be called a stormy life. But the day that his passions began to yield, his self-indulgence began to take the form of laziness ; and it was not long before he began to yield himself a willing slave to the power which had now reduced him to moral poltroonery. For many years now, more distinctly marked since the death of his wife, he had led the same kind of life, if life it may be called in which the main object seemed only and always to make it a life of his own making, and not that which God had meant for and made possible to him. On his first acquaintance with the moral phenomenon, it had seemed to Donal an inhuman and strangely exceptional case — a something altogether different from anything else to be found in the ordinary world of humanity. But reflecting on the thing, he came presently to see that it was only a more pronounced form of the universal human disease — a disease so deep-seated in the nature that, though it

cannot of course reach to the very roots of it, he who has it worst, least knows or can believe that he has any disease at all, but attributes the whole of his discomfort to the fact that things outside him are not such as he would have them ; whereas his refusal to fall in with and accept them as they are, constitutes one of the most ineradicable symptoms of the disease. For whether by stimulants or narcotics, whether by company or ambition, whether by making haste to be rich or studying to excel after some less contemptible fashion, we endeavor to lead another life than that which God meant for us when he made us — a life of truth namely, of obedience, humility, and love, we shall find we have walked equally in a vain show. For God alone *is*, and without him we are not. This must to many be but as a sound from some tinkling metaphysical cymbal, but the day will come when the sad and lonely being that has so lived must perceive not merely has he walked in a vain show, but that he has been himself but the phantom of a dream. Then he will perhaps begin to understand that were it not for the life of the one living God going forth to make him be and keep him being — away from the death which he would court for himself, he must fade at once out of even that limbo of vanities in which he has hitherto found his imagined well-being, blown about in helpless gyration.

He more and more seldom went out of the house, more and more seldom left his apartments. At times he would read a great deal, and then again for days would not open a book, but seem absorbed in meditation — a meditation which in fact however had nothing in it worthy of being called meditation. He was,

naturally, losing all influence over his kind, as he who lives apart from his kind must, nor was the remnant he yet retained of a nature to comfort or elevate. Several times after those I have recorded, he asked Donal to dine with him, and had Lady Arctura to dine also — when Donal could hardly keep down a strange feeling that she was not the same person he met in other parts of the castle. Not only was her manner to him different, but she would on these occasions develop a power of looking and behaving so like an ordinary common-place lady of rank that Donal would sit wondering. Was this or the other the real Arctura, he would ask himself. But at length he all at once remembered that much the same had she always appeared in the company of Miss Carmichael. She would make the most lady-like remarks to her uncle, would laugh at the poorest of the poor jokes in which the earl was not wanting at times when he tried to be what he had no longer spirit enough for — and in short was as uninteresting as the most fastidious of common-place people could have desired in a young lady of position.

The earl's behavior to Donal had till this last interview, continued much the same ; nor did there seem the least memory left of the unpleasant passages between them, or the least consciousness that, if he had himself spoken the truth, then Donal was the holder of a secret by which he could frustrate all his plans and hopes for the future of his family — which plans and hopes he possibly cherished the more in the foolish fancy of thus repairing in some measure the wrong he had done his children's mother. A mind thoroughly diseased will even seek to atone for

wrong by fresh wrong — in its turn to pass and demand like reparation. He was ready now to do anything to restore his sons to the position of the right to which he had deprived them through the wrong, which, from nothing but the pride of self-love and self-worship, he had done his wife — for as his wife he had always treated her, and such she surely was in the sight of God. This was now almost the only tie that bound him to the reality of things, and that mainly through the conscience, now she was gone, of cruelty he had in many ways, some of them such as I dare not put on record, used towards her — a cruelty which, in the horrible presentments of his physico-artificial dreams, returned upon himself in terrible forms of righteous retaliation. So far I will go in the mention of his wickedness towards her, for it is perhaps necessary to the credibility of what follows, as to state that, upon occasions not infrequent, he had in the moral madness of the self-adoration which had possessed him — as bad a demon as ever raged in the fiercest fire of Moloch — inflicted hideous bodily pains and sores, and humiliations upon her — to see, as he said to himself, how much she would bear for his sake. And now, through all his denials to himself of a life beyond, the conviction would occasionally overwhelm him that he would one day meet her again; then it would at least be something to tell her what for her sake he had done for her children! And it was one of the vile influences of his means to a false existence, that nothing whatever, be its character what it might, required to be done and done again for the deadening of the mind to it; it had only to be presented often enough, whether in the imagined form of a thing done, or a

thing going to be done, to seem a thing reasonable and altogether doable. The real had departed from him, and in its place a false appearance of the real had been substituted — a creation of his own instead of the creation of the essential life, by whose power alone he was himself able falsely to create — out of this conspiracy of marsh and mirage, who could tell what vile things might issue! From such a chaos the devil has power to produce. Though he cannot create, he can with that which is created, work moral horrors more hideous than those of the yet unperfected animal world. Many such are every day being born in civilized human society, though many of them die in the darkness in which they are born, and but one comes now and then forth to frighten public day with its hideous glare. Because they are thus seldom seen, many deny that they exist, or, if they exist, that they need be spoken of. But if any man may thus be terrified at the possibilities of his own neglected nature, something is done towards the redemption of that nature. The waking sense of a need of the breathing presence of that which is true, and makes true, may follow.

Donal was not summoned again to his employer's presence. The wonder was that he did not now at length receive his dismissal. It was probably the lingering best in the man's heart, his love for his boy Davie, that prevented him from sending from the house an influence so antagonistic to that which ruled in himself.

CHAPTER XXXII.

A STRANGE BURIAL.

THE next night, as if by a common understanding, for it was without word spoken, the three met again in the housekeeper's room, where she had supper waiting them as before. The patent object was to know the conclusion she might have come to with regard to the disposal of the remains in the chapel. But, as by common consent, the business of the meeting was postponed until supper was over. The housekeeper told two or three of the stories of which she had so many; and Donal recounted one or two of such as floated about his country-side, mostly of the second sight—all of which seemed as purposeless as strange. Arctura happening to mention the music that was said always to announce the death of the head of a neighboring house, Donal remarked that that might have been what suggested to some genius, musical at once and mechanical, to make the Æolian harp, by which the sounds that had so often puzzled the inhabitants of the castle were now apparently explained.

“Why do you say *apparently*, Mr. Grant?” asked Lady Arctura.

“Because we have not yet proved,” answered Donal, “that this is the sole cause of the sounds: there *may* be another as well.”

“But is it not enough to find a cause for a thing? Must we therefore prove there can have been no other cause?”

“We may be able to believe without it; but I cannot therefore grant that we have had all sufficing proof.”

“That way there can be no end to proving!”

“I grant it. Such a thing as absolute proof is hardly to be had. If you are of a doubting mind, you will demand more and more. It is proof of quite another sort that the obedient soul gains through its obedience.”

“I think I understand you,” said Arctura.

“But now, Mistress Brooks,” said Donal, “have you made up your mind what you would have us do with the dust in the chapel?”

“I’ve been thinking,” answered Mrs. Brooks, “that, seein’ it’s a bonny starry nicht, the best w’y would be, this varra nicht, whan the hoose is asleep, to lift an’ lay’t doon oorsels three.”

“That place down in the hollow of the park was once used as a mausoleum, was it not?” said Donal.

“I kenna about yer gran’ word, but doobtless, though the noo it’s only a ruin, it was used as a place to lay them in gif that be what ye mean; an’ we canna do better than tak’ them there.”

“To-night, you say, Mistress Brooks?”

“The sooner the better, dinna ye think, Mr. Grant? my lady?”

Arctura only looked at Donal.

“Surely,” he answered; “but will there not be some preparations to make?”

“No that mony, I’m thinkin’,” returned the house-

keeper. "I'll get a fine auld sheet, and intil that we'll lay the remains, an' row them up, and carry them to their hame."

"Hame," said Arctura, with question of the word.

"Ay, surely hame, my lady. Whaur should the hame o' the human dust be but whaur it first cam frae — jist as the speerit maun return to God wha gave it? I'll go and get the sheet, if my lady thinks proper."

"I think you are always right, Mistress Brooks," answered Lady Arctura.

"But," said Donal, "don't you think it would be better for you and me to get all done in the chapel first, so that Lady Arctura need not go down there again? She could join us when we have got all ready."

"She wouldna like to be left here her iane. I dinna suppose there can be onything sae varra fearsome efter so mony years are ower!"

"There is nothing fearsome at all," said Arctura.

"The forces of nature," said Donal, "are constantly at work to destroy the dreadful, and restore the peaceful and wholesome. These dead are but a few handfuls of clean dust."

"Then there's no reason why she shouldn't go with us — she need not touch anything."

She went to one of her presses, and brought out a sheet, and having, at Donal's suggestion, tied a plaid round Lady Arctura, they went up to her room, and thence descended to the chapel. Only one word was uttered as they went: half way down the narrow descent of the mural stair, Mistress Brooks murmured, "Eh, sirs!" and no more.

They each carried a light, and now its first visitors could see better what it was like. A stately little place it was, and when the windows were once opened, as Arctura resolved they should soon be, would be beautiful. But now they must to the task they had set themselves.

The whole of the bedding, as they soon found, had first rotted and then turned to all but dust. The bed-laths themselves were very nearly powder, and seemed to hold together more from habit than strength. The three stood by the side of this bier of sleep looking on it for some moments in silence. No wonder was it that their hearts felt strange, or that when at length they spoke, it was in little above a whisper. Donal alone meditated the practical part, for it was Mrs. Brooks' introduction to the scene of ancient death. At last he spoke.

"How are we to get all this dust into the sheet, Mrs. Brooks?" he said.

"All this dust? No, no," returned the house-keeper; "we hae only to do wi' that o' oor ain kin! Luik ye here, Mr. Grant; I hae that respec' for the deid, I hae no difficlety about han'lin' onything belongin' to them. Lay ye the sheet handy, an' Is' lay in the dist han'fu' by han'fu'. Gien it hadna been that he tuik it again, the Lord's ain body would hae come to something like this!"

Donal looked at Arctura, and Arctura smiled. Said Donal —

"We make our own defilements. We all need, one way and another, the lesson of the descending sheet, in which were things clean and unclean — after the notions of man."

As he spoke he laid the sheet on the side of the bed, and began to lift and lay in it the dry dust, with here and there a little bit of bone. Mrs. Brooks helped, but would have prevented Arctura. She was not pleased, however, and insisted on having her share in the burying of her own people, whom God knew, and she would know one day. For of all fancies, the fancy that we go into the other world like a set of spiritual moles burrowing in the dark of a new and altogether unknown existence, not as children with a history and an endless line of living ancestors, is of the most foolish. Close relations have we to those who have gone before us — for many of them may have to labor, that the mothers may in truth be saved by their child-bearing of us! She would yet talk to those whose dust she was now reverently lifting in her hands, to restore it to its grand-mother — dust. For when they carried the sheet to the altar, and from it swept up every little particle, that they mingled first with what was surely its mother dust! then Donal knotted the sheet together, and they rested from their work, and began to look around them a little. Arctura and the housekeeper went peering about in the half-darkness, finding here and there signal remnants of the occupancy of the place; Donal went looking for indications of former means of communication with the outer world. That could not be the only way to the chapel by which they had come, neither could that be the only other by the door they had passed as they came down, for it communicated on the inside with such a narrow approach.

Outside the immediate door by which they had entered the chapel, there was a passage running par-

allel with the wall under the windows ; it turned which at right angles, behind the wall against the altar stood. Then first it struck him that the altar was in the wrong position — in the west end, namely ; it had probably been moved for some reason when the bed was placed there ; as it now stood it could not be seen from the little gallery except by leaning over and looking straight down. Under the gallery was the angled continuation of the passage, and there in the wall he saw signs that required further examination. “There must have been an entrance there once,” he said to himself.

It the meantime the two women had made a somewhat appalling discovery. Between the foot of the bed and the altar was a little table, on which were two drinking vessels, apparently of pewter, and the mouldered remains of a pack of cards. Surely these had something to do with the legends that had survived the disappearance of the place !

But it was time to finish what they had begun : Donal took up the parcel of dust, Arctura led the way, as knowing it better than Mrs. Brooks, and Donal brought up the rear with his bundle. They went softly across the castle, now up, now down, now turning a corner in one direction, now another in the opposite, and at last arrived at the door opening upon what was now called, by more than one in the castle, Mr. Grant’s stair. By that they descended ; and, without danger of disturbing the house, though not without some fear of possibly meeting the earl in one of his midnight wanderings, they reached the open air, and took their way down the terraces, and across the park, to the place of ancient burial.

It was a frosty night, with the waning sickle of a moon, low in the heaven, and many brilliant stars above it. Followed by far faint ethereal shadows, they passed across the lawn, through the ghostly luminous dusk, of funereal processions one of the strangest that ever sought a grave. They reached the ruin in the hollow where it stood in a clump of trees. Inside its walls they removed a number of stones, and Donal dug a grave, not very deep — that was hardly necessary for such tenants. There they laid the knotted sheet, covered it up with earth, and laid again the stones upon the spot. It lay very near to kindred, probably ancestral dust, for the ruin was ancient. Then they returned as they went, and that funeral walk was not likely ever to be forgotten. So silently they went, so straight along the green moon-regarded rather than moon-lit grass, that if any one had seen them through the strange starry night, he would have taken them for a procession of the dead rather than of the living to bury their dead. As soon as they re-entered they parted — lady Arc-tura to dream of floating through loveliest regions of disembodied delight, and Donal to sleep the sleep of the man who has done one day's work, and has another before him.

CHAPTER XXXIII.

AFTER CHURCH.

WHATEVER Lady Arctura might decide concerning the restoration of the chapel to the light of day, Donal thought it would not be amiss for him, without mentioning it to her, or troubling her nervous nature with further strain of anxious investigation, to find out what he could about the relations of the place to the rest of the house: in any case to come that would be something gained! It favored his wish that the next day Arctura was prevailed upon by the housekeeper to remain in bed, and so recover from the fatigue and loss of sleep of the previous nights: the reaction from their excitement was great exhaustion. Her strong will, good courage, and trusting heart, had made severe demands upon an organization as delicate as it was responsive: in part by wondrous variety of combination does God work out his lovelily differing men and women. So that being Saturday, he resolved to go down alone that afternoon, telling no one, and explore. First of all he would try to open the door on a level with the little gallery. As soon as he was free, therefore, he got the tools he judged likely to be necessary, and went down. The door was of strong sound oak, with ornate iron hinges going all across it. He was on the better side for opening it, that is the inside, but

though the ends of the hinges and their bearing-pins in the wall were exposed, he soon saw that the door was so well within the frame that it was useless to think of heaving the former off the latter. The lock and its bolt were likewise exposed to his examination and attack ; they were huge, and the key was on the other side and in the lock, so that he could not have picked it had he been more of a locksmith than he was ; while the nails that fastened it to the door were so hard fixed that he was compelled to give up the idea of removing it ; they were probably riveted through a plate of iron on the other side. But there was the socket into which the bolt shot — merely an iron staple ! He might either force this out with a lever if he could find one strong enough, and could manage to apply it, or, which was the more hopeful way, he might file it through. He would try the latter mode : when he had roughly removed the scales of rust with which it was caked, he found its thickness considerably less than it seemed, and set himself to the task of filing it through, first on the top and then at the bottom. It was a slow but a sure process, and would be in less danger of being heard than any more violent one.

But, although it was yet for a time broad daylight outside, so like midnight was it, and the season that belongs to the dead, that he was haunted with the idea that there was a presence behind him. But he would not turn his head to see, for he felt that if he were once to yield to the inclination he would be stopping every moment to satisfy himself that he was alone — so far at least as his senses could tell him. He knew also, from old childish experience, that the

way to meet the horrors of the imagination is to yield not one hair's breadth to their intrusions and suggestions ; so not once while he worked did he turn his head. And while he worked, he thought ; and he saw very clearly that the only protection against the terrors of alien presence must be the consciousness of the one home presence of the eternal : if a man felt that he could never fear anything ; whereas, for those who are not one with the source of being, every manifestation of that being in a life other than their own must be a kind of terror to them — so alien, antipathetic, so *other*, so unappeasable, implacable ! Yea, the time will come when to such their own being must be a horror of repugnant consciousness.

The work was very slow — the impression he made on the hard iron with the worn file only enough to prevent him from throwing it aside as useless. He went on at it for a long time, until at last weariness began to invade him, and with that the sense of his situation grew more keen : great weariness overcomes the sense of the terror by night, but the beginnings of weariness add to it. Every few moments he would stop, thinking he heard the cry of a child, but it was only to know it was the noise of his file, he would stop for the night, or at least till after tea, and get a better.

He did not go back that night, but went instead to the town to buy a new and more suitable file.

The next day was Sunday, and in the afternoon Donal and Davie were walking in the old avenue together. They had been to church, and had heard a dull sermon on the most stirring of reported facts, next to that of the resurrection of the Lord himself —

his raising of Lazarus. So dull and unreal was the whole aspect of the thing as presented by the preaching man, that it was no wonder either that not a word had passed on the subject between them on the way home, or that now Davie should suddenly say : —

“ Mr. Grant, how *could* anybody make a dead man alive again ? ”

“ I don't know, Davie,” answered Donal. “ If I knew how, I should very probably be able to do it myself.”

“ It is very hard to believe.”

“ Yes, very hard, if you do not know anything about the person who is said to have done it to account for *his* being able to do it though another could not. But just think of this : if nobody had ever seen or heard about death, it would be just as hard, perhaps harder, to believe that anything could bring about the change. The one seems to us easy to understand, just because we are familiar with it : if we had seen the other take place a few times, we should see nothing in it too strange, nothing indeed but what was to be expected in certain circumstances and relations of persons and things.”

“ But that is not enough to prove it ever has taken place.”

“ Assuredly not. We must know something in particular about it, else it cannot look likely to us.”

“ Tell me, please, what kind of thing could make it look likely.”

“ I will begin a little way off from your question — in all ages men have longed to see God — some in a grand way, others in a poorer fashion. At last, according to the story of the gospel, the time came

when the Father of men who did not know him, saw it fit to show himself to them. His son, who was the only perfect man, took the form that belonged to him — that of a perfect man, for he was the eternal son of him in whose image we men are made, and came to them. But the most of them did not believe he was the son of God, he was so unlike what they fancied the son of God would be like. But some, who were more like God themselves, did think him very like what God must be, though they were not pleased that he did not make more show. Now his whole object was to make them know and trust in and obey his Father who was everything to him and all beings. But people were so miserable over their dead people that they could hardly think about God, and would hardly believe anything he said to them — did not care about him. They said they would rise again the last day, but that was so far away, and they were gone such a distance, that they did not care for that. So Jesus wanted to make them know and feel that they were alive all the time, and could not be far away, seeing they were all alive to the God in whom we all live; that they had not lost them though they could not see them, for they were quite within his reach, as much so as ever, and just as safe with, and as well looked after by his father and their father as they had ever been in all their lives. It was no doubt a dreadful-looking thing to have them put in a hole, and waste away to dust, but they were not therefore gone out — they were only gone in! To help them to know all this he did not say much, but he just called one or two of them back for a while. Of course Lazarus was going to die again, and no

doubt did die again ; but can you think that the two sisters who loved him so dearly, either loved him less or wept over him the next time as they did the first time he died ? ”

“ No ; I think that would have been very foolish. ”

“ Well, then, if you think about it, you will see that no one who believes that story can escape being convicted of the same folly as they would think the two sisters of Lazarus guilty of, if they had cried just as much the second time as they did the first time he died, when they did not know he was going to be raised up again. If any one tells me that it does not affect them, I would say you only imagine you believe the story, you do not really believe it ; for where Jesus called Lazarus from, there are your friends, and they are there waiting for you ! Now, I ask you, Davie was it worth while for Jesus to do this for us, the great misery of whose life is that those dear to us die and go away, and who, when we ourselves begin to die, even when we are so tired that we are glad to die, are yet sorry to leave behind us those whom we love — was it, I say, a thing worth doing, to let us see that they are alive with God all the time, and can be produced any moment to our sight when he pleases ? ”

“ Surely it was, sir ! It *ought* to take away the misery of all dying ! ”

“ Then it is a very natural thing to be done, and it is a very reasonable thing to think that it was done. If there is a God, it was natural that he should care enough for his children to come and let them see him, and if he came and saw them, it was natural he should let them know that he saw and cared for those as well whom they had lost sight of. The whole thing seems

to me so natural that I can believe it at once. True, it implies a whole world of things of which we know nothing; but if any one insists on believing nothing but the things he has seen something like, I must just leave him to his misery, and the mercy of God."

If the world had been so made, that such people could without any trouble believe in the maker of it, it would not have been a world worth any man's living in, not even theirs, however well satisfied they might find themselves in it for a while; they would soon be sick of their own existence; neither would the God that made such a world, and so revealed himself to such people, be worth believing in. God alone knows what life is enough for us to live, what life we shall find worth our while; and be sure he is laboring to make it as full, and lovely, and best in beauty, as it is possible for him to make it — only that depends on how much we make possible by believing he is what he is, and letting him have his own blessed way with us. If we do not trust him, and will not work with him, but are always thwarting him in his endeavors to make us alive, then we must be miserable; there is no help for it. And as to death, the fact is we know next to nothing about it. "Do we not!" say the faithless indignantly. "Do we not know the misery of it, the tears, and the sinking of the heart and the desolation!" Yes; you know those; but those are your things, not those of death. About death you know nothing. God has never told us anything about it but that the dead are alive to him, and that one day, they will be again to us. We do not *know* anything about it, I repeat; but the world beyond the doors of death must be as homelike a place as this world is.

"I don't like death," said Davie, after a silence.

"I don't want you to like what you call death, for that is not the thing itself — it is only your fancy about it. You need not think about it at all. The way to get ready for it is to do what you have to do."

"But I do not want to get ready for it. I don't want to go to it; and if I prepare for it, I shall have to go to it."

"You have to go to it whether you prepare for it or not. You cannot help going to it. You must. But it is so far like this world, that, as doing your work at school is the only preparation for college, so the only way to prepare for the next world, as we call it, is to do the thing God gives us to do in this world."

"Don't you fear death, Mr. Grant?"

"No, I do not. Why should I fear any best thing in its time that can come to me? Neither will you, I think, when the time comes. It is not the dreadful thing it looks."

"Why should it look dreadful if it is not dreadful?"

"That is a very proper question. It looks dreadful, and must look dreadful, to every one who cannot see the thing that alone makes life itself not dreadful. If you saw a great dark cloak come moving along the road as if it were round somebody, but there was nobody inside it at all, you would be frightened!"

"Indeed I should. It would be awful!"

"It would. But if you saw inside the cloak, and making it come towards you, the most beautiful loving face you ever saw — of a man carrying in his arms a little child; and saw the child clinging to him, and

looking in his face with all the love a child's face can show, would you be frightened at his black cloak?"

"No, for that would be silly."

"There you have your answer! The thing that makes death look so fearful is that we do not see all of it. Those who see only the black cloak and think it is moving along of itself, may well be frightened; but those who see the face inside the cloak, would be fools indeed to be frightened! Before Jesus came, people lived in great misery about death; but after he rose again those who believed in him used always to talk of death as falling asleep; and I daresay the story of Lazarus, though it was not so very much, after the rising of the Lord himself, had a large share in enabling them to think that way about death."

When they went home, Davie running up to Lady Arctura's room, told her as well as he could the conversation he had with Mr. Grant. "Oh, Arkie," he said, "to hear him talk you would think Death hadn't a leg to stand upon!" Arctura smiled; but it was a smile through the cloud of unshed tears, for she felt that, lovely as death may be, one would like to get the good of this world's things before going to the next. There was something seemed to come every now and then to tell her that she would not be long in this world, and she did not feel quite willing to go, for of late the world had grown very beautiful to her. She must get up to-morrow she thought, for she was losing much precious time! There was Davie getting so much she might have too! She must learn all that she could before she went!

CHAPTER XXXIV.

THE PAPER IN THE BUREAU.

IT was night on the Monday, before Donal again went down into the hidden parts of the castle. Arctura had come to the schoolroom, but seemed ill able for her work, and Donal would not tell her what he was doing there, for fear of making her think of things it was better should drift farther away in the past of her memory. But he was certain she would never be quite herself until the daylight entered the chapel and all the hidden places of the house were open to the air of God's world. So he thought he would this time for her sake encounter the powers of darkness in their own hour: he would not have her know; and besides he was desirous of entirely overcoming the weakness that rendered it possible for him to be every now and then afraid.

And this time he was less assailed — by the ghosts of fears rather than by the fears themselves — neither was he in any way greatly disturbed. With his new file he made better work than before, and had soon finished cutting through the top of the staple. Trying it then with a poker he had brought down for a lever, he broke the bottom part across, and there was nothing to hold the bolt: with a little creaking noise of rusty hinges the door slowly opened to his steady pull on the lock.

He threw the light of his candle into the space unclosed : there was nothing as it appeared but a close screen or wall of plank. When he gave it a push, however, it yielded : it was close-fitting, and without any fastening. It disclosed a small hanging closet or press — on the opposite side of which was another door. This he could not at once open. Plainly, however, it was secured with merely a small common lock, such as is on any cupboard, and it cost him little trouble to force it. The door opened outwards : he looked in and saw a little room, of about nine feet by seven. Casting a hasty glance around, he entered. There was in it nothing but an old-fashioned secretary or bureau, not so old, it struck him at once, as that he had seen in Morven house in the town, and a seat like a low music-stool before it. “It may have been a vestry for the priest,” thought Donal ; “but it must have been used much later than the chapel, for this desk is not older than the one at the Mains, and I once heard Mistress Jean say that was made for her grandmother !” How did it first get into the little place ? He looked all round : the walls were continuous ; there was not, there could not be another door ! Above the bureau was a little window in one — or it seemed to be a window, but it was so overgrown with dirt that he could not certainly tell whether it was more than the blind show of an eye with a wall behind it ; but door certainly there was not. It might get through the oak door behind, but it could not, he thought, have reached that through any of the passages he had come through ; and if there had been any wider approach in that direction, surely it had been built up long before this piece of

furniture was made! If his observations and reasoning were correct, it followed that there must, and that not so *very* long ago, have been another entrance to the place in which he stood!—There might be something in the bureau to reveal how it had come there, or show what time it had been left there.

He turned to look at the way he had himself entered: it was through a common looking press of painted deal, that filled up the end of the little room, which there narrowed to about five feet. When the door in the back of it was shut, it looked merely the back of the press.

He turned again to the bureau. There was a strange feeling at his heart. But he never thought whether or not he had a right to look into it: he felt himself all the time acting merely and only in the service of Lady Arctura. Besides why should he imagine anybody's secret there? Nobody alive, he would have said to himself, had the question come to him, could know of this chamber. The bureau stood open—that is, with the cover down, and on it lay writing-paper, some of it on large sheets, some of quite modern aspect and size, but all stained with dust and age and blot. A pen lay with them, and beside was a glass ink-bottle of the commonest type, in which the ink had dried into cakes and flakes. He took up one of the sheets with a great stain on it. Why did he look at it so? The bottle must have been overturned! But was it ink? No; it could not be! It stood up too thick on the paper. With a gruesome shiver Donal wetted his finger, and tried the surface of it: a little came off and looked of a faint suspicious brown. What was written on the paper?

He held the faded lines close to the candle, and tried to decipher them. It was not difficult! He sat down on the stool, and read thus—his reading broken by the spot which had for the present obliterated a part of the writing: there was no date:

“My husband for such I will—*blot*—are in the sight of God—*blot*—men why are ye so cruel what—*blot*—deserve these terrors—*blot*—in thought have I—*blot*—hard upon me to think of another.”

Here the writing came below the blot and went on unbroken. “My little one is gone and I am left lonely, oh! so lonely. I cannot but think that if you had loved me as you once did I should yet be clasping my little one to my bosom, and you would have a daughter to comfort you after I am gone. I feel sure I cannot long survive this—ah! there my hand has burst out bleeding again; but do not think I mind it—I know it was only an accident. You never meant to do it though you teased me by refusing to say so—besides it is nothing. You might draw every drop of blood from my body and I would not care, if only you would not make my heart bleed so. Oh! it is gone all over my paper, and you will think I have done it to let you see how it bleeds—but I cannot write it all over again—it is too great a labor and too painful to write, so you must see it just as it is. But I dare not think where my baby is, for if I should be doomed never to see her because of the love I have borne for you and consented to be as you wished if I am cast out from my God because I loved you more than him I shall never see you again for to be where I could see you would never be punishment enough for my sins.”

Here the writing stopped abruptly ; the bleeding of the hand had probably brought it to a close, and it had never been folded up and never sent, but, lying there, had lain there. He looked if he could anywhere find a date ; there was none upon the sheet he had read. He held it up to the light, and saw a paper mark ; and close by lay another sheet with merely a date, in the same handwriting, as if the writer had been about to commence another in lieu perhaps of the one spoiled. He laid the papers thoughtfully down ; how strange ! an old withered grief looks almost as pathetic as an old withered joy ! But who is to say they were withered ? The same who look upon death as an evil, yet regard it as the healer of sorrows ! Who can tell how long a grief may last unwithered ? “ Surely,” thought Donal, “ till the life heals it ! He is a coward who would lose his sorrow by the mere lapse of time, the mere forgetting of a brain growing musty with old age. It is God alone who can heal — the God of the dead and of the living ! and the dead must find him, or be miserable for evermore ! ”

He took a packet of papers from a pigeon hole of the desk, and undid the string around them ; they were but bills, but they had plenty of dates ! He had not a doubt left that the letter he had partly read was in the writing of the late wife of the present earl — wife as she had been considered, wife as Donal was sure, she was to be called only by the world’s courtesy and God’s truth, not by the world’s law.

What was he to do now ? He had thought he was looking into matters much older — things over which the permission of Lady Arctura, by right extended,

was enough, but now he knew differently. Still, the things he had discovered were only such as she had a right to know; though whether he was to tell her at once he would not yet make up his mind. He put the papers back, took up his candle, and with a feeling of helpless dismay, such as had never before oppressed him, and which destroyed all sense of fear as he went, withdrew to his own chamber. When he reached the door of it, yielding to a sudden impulse, he turned away, went further up the stair, and out upon the roof.

It was a frosty night, with all the stars brilliant overhead. He looked up and said, "Oh Saviour of men! thy house is vaulted with light; thy secret places are secret from excess of light; in thee is no darkness at all; thou hast not thy terrible crypts and dark-hidden places; thy light is the awful terror of those who love the darkness because their deeds are evil! Be my life; fill my heart with thy light, that I may never hunger or thirst after anything but thy will; that I may walk in the light, and from me light and not darkness may go forth."

As he turned to leave the roof there came a faint chord from the *Æolian* harp. "It sings, brooding over the very nest of evil deeds!" he thought. "The light eternal with the keen arrows of radiant victory will yet at last rout from the souls of his creatures the demons that haunt them! But if there be demons, what if the souls turn themselves to demons? What then is a demon? Are the demons victorious over God, and beyond his power? If they be beyond God, how do they live? By their own power? Then are they God's? If not, they live by God's power, and

are not beyond him. If they can never be brought back, then the life of God, the all-pure, goes out to keep alive, in and for evil, that which is essentially bad — for that which is irredeemable is essentially bad." Thus reasoned Donal with himself, and his reasoning, instead of troubling his faith, caused him to cling the more to the only One, the sole hope and saviour of the hearts of his men and women, without whom the whole universe was but a charnel house in which the ghosts of the dead went about crying over the irremediable sorrows of the life that was gone from them. Where else were they to look for the setting right of the things that were wrong.

He turned and stood looking over the cold sea. And as he gazed, a chill wave of something like doubt came rolling over him. He knew that presently he would strike out and rise to the top of it and swim, but in the meantime it was tumbling him about in its ugly will. He stood and gazed motionless with a dull sense that he was waiting for his will to awake. But suddenly there was the consciousness that he and his will were one; that he had not to wait for his will to wake, but had himself to wake, namely, to will, and do, and so be. And with that he said to himself again, it is neither time nor eternity, nor human consolation, nor everlasting sleep, nor the satisfied judgment that is the cure for all things; it is the heart, the will, the being of the Father; while that remains, can the irremediable, the irredeemable exist? If there arose a grief in the heart of one of his creatures not otherwise to be destroyed, he would take it into himself, and there consume it in his own creative fire — himself bearing the grief, carrying the pain of the

sorrow. For did not Christ die? and would he not die again rather than leave room for one irremediable loss in the realms of his love — that is of his creation? “Blessed are they who have not seen and yet have believed!”

Over his head the sky was full of shining worlds, most of them doubtless only in process of making — to be mansions in the Father’s house at last; and he thought as he was often glad to think that instead of our being at the end of things, where they are all growing old and drawing near to their final rest, we are but in the beginnings and on the threshold of creation; that our Father is as young as ever he was, a God who, while he is the ancient of days, can yet never grow old; and that he who has filled the dull unbelieving nations with food and gladness, has a splendor of delight ever preparing for the souls which as constantly as he is creating as constantly is he educating and enlarging to the receiving and holding of his mighty ever-growing joy.

CHAPTER XXXV.

ALARMING THE EARL.

WHEN are you going down again to the chapel, Mr. Grant?" said Lady Arctura, the next day after school. She was better, and had come again to lessons.

"I want to go this evening — by myself, if you don't mind, my lady," he answered. "I want to find out all I can about it; but I can't help thinking it would be better for you not to go down again till you are ready to order everything to be cleared away between it and the open world. You can't stand the damp and bad air of the place. If I were you I would just have it done, and say nothing till it was done."

"I think it was rather the want of sleep that made me ill," she answered; "but you can do just as you please. You have as great a respect for what is old as I have myself, and I am not afraid of anything you will do."

"I thank you for your confidence, my lady," returned Donal. "I do not think you will repent it."

"I know I shall not."

So again at night Donal went down — this time chiefly intent on learning whether there was any other way open out of it, and on verifying its position in the castle, of which he had now a pretty good idea. He

went first to the end of the passage parallel with the length of the chapel and turning round the west end of it, and there examined the signs he had before observed. Yes! sure enough those must be the outer ends of two of the steps of the great staircase, coming through and resting on the wall! That end of the chapel then was close to the great spiral stair. Plainly too a door had been there built up in the process of constructing the stair. The chapel had not then been entered from that level at least since the building of the great stair. Before that, there had probably been an outside stair to this door, in an open court; and if the chapel was rendered inaccessible before the spiral stair was built, one of the means was probably the removing of the said stair.

Finding no other suggested direction for inquiry, he was on his way out, and already near the top of the stair in the wall, thinking with himself that in the morning he would take fresh observations outside, when up from behind, overtaking him as if sent after him from the regions he had left, came a blast of air and blew out his candle. He shivered—not with the cold of it, though it breathed of underground damp and doubtful growths, but from a feeling of its unknown origin, and the thought whether it might not have come after him to make him go down again. Anyhow it seemed to indicate some opening to the outer air which he had not discovered. He made haste to light his candle, turned and again descended, carefully guarding it with one hand, and thinking as he went that, gruesome as that cold sigh seemed, coming as from a shut-up depth with which the world of light had nothing to do, its terror might be but the

messenger, the outward and visible sign, — nay, even the offspring of something at hand to destroy fear and give rest ! It might be like the dread men have of God, their only saviour and perfect deliverer. When he says, “Where art thou ?” the man that does not know him takes the voice for the voice of his doom, when it is the word of him who comes to draw him out of the pit where he lies waiting for death.

But might not the wind have been a draught down the shaft in which were stretched the music-chords ? No, for in that case they would have loosed some light-winged messenger with it ! It must come from lower at least than that ! indicating some gap he had failed to find ! If it would but come again when he was below ! He crossed the little gallery, descended, and went into the chapel ; it lay as still as a tomb ; but because it was a tomb no more, he felt as if it were deserted — as if some life had gone out of it ! He looked all round it, searching closely the walls where he could reach, and staring as high as the light would show, but could perceive no sign of possible entrance for the messenger blast. But just as he was leaving it the wind came again — plainly along the little passage he had left but a few minutes ago. It kept blowing when he turned into it, and now he thought it came upwards.

As he stooped to examine the lower parts of the passage, his light was again blown out, and therewith he was surprised to find how much he had got over the terrors of the place. Anything in the least unexpected might at once call them back, but in the meantime he had ceased almost to think of them ! Having once more relighted his candle, he searched along

the floor, and the adjacent parts of the walls, and presently found, close to the floor, in the inner wall, that is, the wall of the chapel itself, an opening that seemed to go downwards through it. But if that was its direction why had he not seen it inside the chapel? He then thinking recalled that, although from the landing-place of the stair there was a step down into the chapel, there were three or four down to the passage, and concluded therefore that this opening went down under the floor of the chapel, probably into a crypt, where not unlikely lay yet more dust of the dead; if there was here a way into that, he might be nearer a way out! The opening showed only a mere narrow slit, but there might be more of it under the floor; and among the slabs with which it was paved, was one that went all the length of the slit. He would try to raise this one! That would want a crow-bar! He would get one at once! Having got so far, he could not rest till he knew more! It must be very late! Would the people in the castle be in bed yet? He could not tell; he had left his watch in his room. It might be midnight, and here he was, burrowing like a mole about the roots of the old house, or like an evil thing in the heart of a man!

He crept up again and out by his own turret stair, and so to the tool-house, which he found locked. But lying near was a half-worn shovel, which he thought might do; he would have a try with it. So, like one in a terrible dream of ancient ruins he is doomed to haunt, creeping through all sorts of mouldy and low-browed places, he went once more into the entrails of the house, and down to the place of its darkness.

There, endeavoring to insert the sharp edge of the worn shovel in the gap between the stone he wanted to raise and the one next it, he succeeded even more readily than he had dared hope. He soon lifted it, disclosing the slope as of the bottom of a small window down into a place below. How deep the place might be, and whether it would be possible to get out of it again, he must try to discover before venturing down. There could be small risk of setting such a place on fire; he took a letter from his pocket, and lighting it, threw it in. It fell and burned on something that looked like a small flat gravestone, with a skeleton carved upon it. The descent was little more than about seven feet, into what looked like a cellar. He hesitated no longer, but, blowing his candle out, and putting it in his pocket lest he should lose it, got into the opening, slid down the slope, and all in the dark, dropped — with no further hurt than grazing his nose on the wall as he descended. He then relighted his candle, and looked about him.

There was the flat stone, about big enough for a child's grave, but with nothing like a skeleton upon it: it did look like a gravestone, but there was not even an inscription upon it. It lay in a vaulted place, unpaved, with a floor of hard-beaten earth. Searching about the walls he soon caught sight of what looked like the top of an arch rising from the floor in one of them, as near as he could judge, just under the built-up door in the passage above. There was room enough to creep through. He crept, and found himself under the first round of the great spiral stair. On the floor of the small inclosed space at the bottom of its well was a dust-pan and a house-

maid's brush — and there was the tiny door at which they were shoved in, after their morning's use upon the stair! Through that he crept next: he was in the great hall of the house, from which the stair ascended. Afraid of being by any chanced is covered, he put out his light, and proceeded up the stair in the dark. He had gone but a few steps when he heard the sound of descending feet. He listened and listened: they turned into the room on the stair. As he crept past it, he heard sounds which satisfied him that the earl was in the little closet behind it. Everything now came together in his mind: he hurried up to Lady Arctura's late sitting-room: thence descended, for the third time that night, to the old oak door, and entered the little chamber, and hastening to the farther end, laid his ear against the wall.

Plainly enough he heard sounds — such sounds as he had before heard from the mouth of the dream-walking rather than sleep-walking earl. He was moaning, and calling in a low voice of entreaty after some one whose name never grew audible to the listener on the other side of the wall. “Ah!” thought Donal, “who would find it hard to believe in roaming and haunting ghosts, who had once seen this poor man going about the house like Lady Macbeth, possessed by the seven demons of his own evil and cruel deeds, and without hope of relief in heaven — only in the grave, nor much in that! — How easily I could punish him now with a lightning blast of hellish terror!” It was but a thought; it did not even amount to a temptation; for Donal knew he had no right. Vengeance belongs to the Lord, who alone knows what use to make of it.

I do not myself believe that *mere* punishment exists anywhere in the economy of the highest. I think *mere* punishment a human idea, not a divine one. But the consuming fire is more terrible to the evil-doer than any idea of punishment invented by the most riotous of human imaginations. Punishment it is, though not *mere* punishment, which is a thing not of creation but of destruction: it is a power of God and for his creature. As love is God's being and a creative energy in one, so the pains of God are to the recreating of the things his love has made, and sin has unmade.

He heard the lean hands of the earl, at the ends of his long arms go sweeping slowly over the wall: he had seen the thing, else he would not have recognized the sounds; and he heard him muttering still, but much too low for him to distinguish the words: by this time Donal was so convinced that he had to do with a right dangerous and unprincipled man, that he would have had little scruple in listening if he could have heard every word, and letting what knowledge of him come that might come. It is only Righteousness that has a right to secrecy, and does not want it. Evil has no right to secrecy, alone intensely desires it, and rages at being foiled of it; for when its deeds come to the light, even Evil has righteousness enough left to be ashamed of some of them. But he could not remain there longer, he felt so sick of the whole thing, and turned away at length hastily. But forgetting the one seat, and carrying his light too much in front of him to see it, he came against and knocked it over, not without noise. A loud cry from the other side of the wall told the dismay he had caused.

It was followed by a stillness, and then a moaning.

As soon as he was out, and had replaced the obstructions of the entrance, he went to find Simmons, and sent him to look after his master. Hearing nothing afterwards of the affair, he did not doubt that the victim of his awkwardness put the whole thing down, if indeed he knew anything of it the next day, to the mingling of imagination with the fact in the manner he was so accustomed to, disabling him by its verisimilitude from distinguishing between the one and the other, or indeed caring to do so.

Tender over Lady Arctura, Donal made up his mind to ask a few questions of the housekeeper before disclosing further what he had found. In the evening, therefore, he sought her room, while Arctura and Davie, much together now, were reading in the library.

“Did you ever hear anything about that little room behind the earl’s room on the stair, Mistress Brooks?” he asked.

“I canna say that ever I did!” she answered. “My auld auntie did mention something to me ance about some place—bide a wee—I hae a wullin’ memory—maybe I’ll min’ upo’ ’t i’ the noo—it was something about biggin’ up an’ takin’ doon! an’ something he was to do, an’ something he never did,—I’m sure I canna tell! But jist gie me time, an’ I’ll min’ upo’ ’t!”

Donal waited, and said not a word: he would not hurry her.

“I min’ this much,” she said at length,—“that they used to be thegither i’ that room. I min’ too that there was something about buildin’ up ae wa’, an’

pu'in doon anither.—It's comin' — it's comin' back to me!'

She paused again a while, and then said :

"Ail I can recollect, Mr. Grant, is this ; that after her death, he biggit up something no far frae that room ! — what was't noo ? — an' there was something about makin' o' the room bigger ? But hoo that could be by buildin' up, I canna think ! Yet I feel sure that was what he did !"

"I think I have a glimmer of light on the thing !" said Donal. "Would you mind coming to the place ? To see it might help us."

"Certainly I will, sir ; but we s' mak' sure his lordship's quiet for the night afore we gang."

"That will be as well," said Donal. "But I hope you will say nothing further to my lady just yet !"

"It might be waur for her not to be told. Besides she might be displeased to think we were doing things of ourselves in her house. She has the pride of her family, Mr. Grant, though she never shows it to you or me."

"For to-night let us think over it, and if you are of the same mind to-morrow, we will tell her. I am not willing to do anything rashly."

To this proposal Mrs. Brooks agreed, and as soon as the household was quiet, they went together to the room on the stair, where Donal stood for some time looking about him to no purpose.

"What's that on the wall ?" he said at last, pointing to the back wall of the room — that, namely, on the other side of which was the little room haunted by both mind and body of the earl.

Two arches, drawn in chalk, as it seemed, had at-

tracted his gaze. Surely light out of the darkness was drawing nigh! Chaos was settling a little towards order!

As near as Donal could judge, the one arch was drawn opposite where he believed the hidden chamber was; the other right against the earl's closet, as it had come to be called in the house, for all knew his lordship had some strange attraction to it—most of them thinking he there said his prayers. It looked just as if they had been marked out for the piercing of the wall with such arches in order to throw the two little rooms on the other side as recesses into the larger. But if that was the earl's intent, why first build a wall—that doubtless to which Mrs. Brooks referred,—doubtless, also that across the middle of what had evidently been one room before.

“That!” returned Mrs. Brooks.

“Yes, those two arches, drawn on the wall.”

The housekeeper looked at them thoughtfully.

“Now there,” said she slowly, “I canna help fancyin’—yes, I’m sure that’s the verra thing my aunt told me about! Those are the places you see marked there, where he was goin’ to tak’ the wall doon, to mak’ the room lairger.—But then whaur could be the wall she said something about his buildin’?”

“Look here,” said Donal; “I will measure the distance from the door there on this side of the wall to the other side of this first arch.—Now come into the little room behind.—Look here! This same measurement takes us right up to the end of the room! So you see if we were to open that second arch, it would be into something behind this wall.”

“Then this must be the verra wa’ he buildit up!”

“What could he have had it built up for, if he was going to open the other wall?” said Donal. “I must think it all over! It was after his wife’s death,

“Yes, I believe so, for I remember something about it besides!”

“One might have thought he would not care so much about altering the house after she was gone!”

“But ye see, sir, he wasna jist sic a pattren o’ a guidman!” said the housekeeper.

“Could it have been for the sake of shutting out, or hiding anything?” suggested Donal.

“It might be to get rid o’ something he was ashamed o’ or couldna beir to look at any more!” she replied. “And I do remember a certain thing! — Curious! — But what then, as you say, about the opening of it afterwards?”

“Only, you see, he has never done it!” said Donal significantly. “The thing takes a shape to me something in this way:—That he wanted to build something out of sight — to annihilate it as far as possible; but in order to prevent speculation, he professed the intention of casting the whole into one room; then built the wall on the pretence either that it was necessary to support something when the other was broken through, or that two recesses with arches would look better; that so pretending, he got the thing done, and then put off and off opening the arches, on one pretext or another, till the thing should be forgotten altogether, as you see it is already, almost entirely! and now I must tell you,” Donal went on, “that I have been behind that wall, and have heard the earl moaning and crying on this!”

“God bless me,” cried the good woman, “I’m no easy scaret, but that’s fearfu’!”

“You would not care then to come to that side of the wall with me?”

“Na, na, no the nicht sir. Come awa’ to my room, an’ we’ll hae a drap o’ toddy; or gien ye winna hae that, Is’ mak ye a cup o’ coffee; an’ syne I’ll tell ye the story—for it’s a’ come back to me noo, that was what made my aunt tell me aboot the buildin’ up o’ yon wa’. It couldna hae ta’en sic a haud o’ me as some o’ auld Mistress Huskisson’s stories, or I wadna hae ta’en sic a time to ca’ ’t back to my min’! ’Deed, sir, I hae hardly a doobt left the thing was just as ye say!”

Donal making no objection, they went together to her room; but when they reached it, Donal entering first started back at sight of Lady Arctura sitting by the fire as if waiting for them. “My lady!” cried the housekeeper, “I thought I left ye soon’ asleep!”

“So I was, I dare say,” answered Arctura; “but I woke again, and finding you had not come up, I thought I would go down to you. I was certain you and Mr. Grant would be somewhere together! Have you been discovering anything more?”

Mrs. Brooks cast a glance at Donal which, notwithstanding what she had said before, he could not but take as a warning not to say anything about the earl. So he left it to her to tell as much or as little as she pleased.

“We hae been prowlin’ aboot the hoose, but no doon yon’er, my lady. I think you an’ me wad better lea’ that to Mr. Grant!”

“It would be better for a time, I think, my lady,”

said Donal. "When you are quite ready to have everything set to rights, and have a resurrection of the old chapel, then you can go and see everything. — For my part I would rather not talk more about it just at present," he added.

"As you please, Mr. Grant," replied Lady Arctura. "We will say nothing more till I have made up my mind, as you say. I don't want to vex my uncle, and I find the question a difficult one. It is associated, you see, with that other we were talking of; and I do not feel myself at present equal to any contest. It makes it more difficult that my uncle is even worse than usual at present. — Shall we not go to bed now, Mistress Brooks?"

All through this time, the sense of help and safety and protection in the presence of the young tutor, was growing in the mind of Arctura. It was nothing to her — what could it be? — that he was the son of a very humble pair; that he had been a shepherd and a cow-herd, and a farm-laborer; the facts were less than nothing to her; she never thought of them except to enter into the feelings of his memorial childhood and youth; for she would never have known anything of them but for his having taken her back with him into the past and its lovely intimacies of all sorts with Nature — nature divine, human, animal, cosmical. And she had recognized that not only to him but to her also was it a matter of immensest importance that such were the facts of his history; for by these had he gathered the greater and most precious parts of his experiences — by home and by prayer, by mother and father and sheep and mountain and wind and sky. And now nearly all she knew about him was, that he was a

tower of strength, a refuge, a strong city, the shadow of a great rock in a weary land. And she trusted him the more that somehow he never invited her trust — never put himself before her — always made her look up to the Life, the perfect heart-origin of her and his yet unperfected humanity, teaching her to hunger and thirst after being righteous like God, with the assurance of being filled. She had once trusted in Sophia Carmichael, but not with her higher being, only with her judgment, and both her judgment and her friend had misled her. Donal had taught her that obedience, not to man but to God, was the only guide to holy liberty, and so had helped her to break the bonds of those traditions of men which, in the shape of authoritative utterances of this or that Church, lay burdens grievous to be borne upon the souls of men. For Christ against all Churches, seemed to her to express his mission. An air of peace, an atmosphere of summer-twilight after the going down of the sun, seemed to her to precede him and announce his approach with a radiation felt at rest. She questioned herself nowise about the matter. Falling in love was a thing that did not suggest itself to her — as indeed what commonly passes for falling in love is but a thing of weakness, self-admiration, and questing unrest, though with a better, the divine force at the root; if she was now in what people call danger, it was of a more serious thing altogether; for the lower is in its very nature transient, while the higher is forever.

The next day again she did not appear, and Mrs. Brooks said she had persuaded her to keep her bed again for a day or two. There was nothing really the matter with her, she said herself, but she was so tired

she did not care to lift her head from the pillow. She had slept very well and was not troubled about anything. She had asked her to beg Mr. Grant to let Davie go and read to her; and to choose something for him to read good for him as well as for her. Donal did as she requested, and did not see Davie again till the next morning.

“Oh, Mr. Grant,” he cried, “you never saw anything so pretty as Arkie is in bed! She is so white and so sweet, and she speaks with a voice so gentle and low! and then she was so kind to me for going to read to her!—and I never saw anybody like her! She looks as if she had just said her prayers, and God told her she should have everything she wanted.”

Donal wondered a little, but hoped more. What he said, must indicate that she was finding the rest she sought in the consciousness of the presence of the God! But why was she so white? Surely she was not going to die! And with that there shot a pang to his heart, and he felt that if she were to go out of the castle, it would be hard to stay in it, even for the sake of Davie. He did not either for a moment imagine himself fallen in love; he had loved once, and his heart had not yet done aching at the memory of bygone pain! He was utterly satisfied with what the father of the children had decreed; but he would never love again! It was all right that he should suffer! Why should he not suffer? He could *live* though he suffered! But he could not hide from himself that the friendship of Lady Arctura, and the help she sought of him, and he was able to give her, had added a fresh and strong interest to his life. For at the first dawn of power in his heart, that is, when he

began to make songs, he had begun to feel that to do something, anything, to cause the sun to shine more brightly on the clouded lives of despondent fellow creatures, was the one thing *worthiest* being in this world for ; his mother had taught him it was that the Lord came into the world for — after grandest divine fashion ; and when, I say, he began to feel power astir within him, he felt moved even as the heart of the Lord was moved. Nor had his trouble made him forget this one good of the life of this world — not at least for more than one week or so ; after which he woke to it again with self-accusations — almost self-contempt. And now to have helped this lovely young creature, whose life seemed lapt in an ever closer-clasping shroud of perplexity, through the teaching of one who herself did not understand, was a thing for him to be glad of — not to the day of his death, but to the never-ending end of his life ! it was an honor conferred upon him by the father, to last for evermore ! for had he not been the assistant-opener of a human door for the Lord to enter in — she within hearing him knock, and trying to open, but not being able ! To be God's helper with our fellows is the one high calling next to the presence of God himself in the inner house.

At the end of a week she was better, and able to see him. She had had the bed in which the housekeeper slept moved into her own room, and made the dressing-room, which also was large, a sitting-room for herself. It was sunny and pleasant ; just the place, Donal thought, he would have chosen for her : she greatly needed the sun — as who does not ? The bedroom too, which the housekeeper had persuaded

her to choose when she left her own, was one of the largest in the house, called the Garland room — old-fashioned like all the rest, but as cheerful as stateliness would permit, with gorgeous hangings, and great pictures — far from homely, but with plenty of sun in it half the day. When Donal congratulated her on the change, she confessed that she had been prevented from making a change sooner, in part by the dread of owing any comfort to an improvement in external circumstances: that might but deceive her as to her inward condition before God.

“ I would have told you,” answered Donal, “ that it would not deceive God, who has undertaken to fill with righteousness those who hunger after it. It is a great pride to refuse anything that might help us to know him ; and of all things his sunlit world speaks of the father of lights ! If that make us happier it makes us fitter to understand him, and he can easily send what cloud may be necessary to temper it. We must not make our own world, inflict our own punishments, or order our own course of instruction : we must simply obey the voice in our ears, and take the thing he sends.

The next day she told him she had had a beautiful night, full of the loveliest dreams — one of which was, that a sweet child came out of a grassy hillock by the wayside, called her mamma, and said she was so much obliged to her for taking her off the cold stone and making her a butterfly ; and with that the little child spread out gorgeous and great butterfly wings and soared away up to a white cloud that hung over her, and there sat looking down on her, and laughing merrily to her.

Every day Davie came to read to her, and thereby Donal had a new duty laid upon him — that of finding suitable pabulum for the two. He was not widely read in light literature, and this entailed a good deal of exploration in that region, nor without the benefit to himself of enlarged experience. But before all this something had happened which the way is now the clearer for me to tell.

CHAPTER XXXVI.

EXPLAINING THE LOST ROOM.

THE morning after the last meeting in the house-keeper's parlor, as Donal sat in the school-room with Davie — about noon it was — he became aware that for a time indefinite he had been hearing the noise of blows of some laborious sort that seemed to come from a great distance, but which, when he grew attentive to it, seemed to come from somewhere in the castle itself, transmitted through the mass of its building. Scarcely knowing why, yet with a fear becoming gradually more definite, he sat listening in no little anxiety for a few moments, becoming more and more convinced that the origin of the noises was indeed in the house itself.

“Davie,” he said, “go and see if you can find out what's going on.”

The recollection of what had happened the night before had not only made him a little anxious, but unwilling to be found himself asking any questions, or showing the smallest curiosity. A suggestion is not always a reasonable one, even when it has the truth behind it.

Davie came back in no small excitement.

“Oh, Mr. Grant, what do you think!” he cried. “I do believe my father is going to look for the lost room! It really seems like earnest! They are

breaking down a wall in the little room—you know it—behind papa's business-room!—on the stair, you know!” he added, fancying from Donal's silence that he could not quite succeed in identifying the place he described. But Donal's silence had a very different cause: he was dismayed to think what might be the consequences if Davie was right. If the earl knew the hidden part of the castle before, which was scarcely to be doubted, for he was not the man to have left undiscovered the oak door at the back of the press, then he would know that things there had been meddled with! He started to his feet.

“You may go and see them at work, Davie,” he said. “We won't have any more lessons this morning.—Was your papa with the workmen?”

“I did not see him. Simmons told me he had sent for the masons this morning, to come at once, and when they came, sent him to tell them to take that wall down: he would be with them before they got through it. Thank you, Mr. Grant. It is such fun making a hole in a wall into somewhere you don't know where! It may be a place you know quite well, or a place you never saw before!”

So saying, Davie ran off.

The moment he vanished, Donal sped to the bottom of his own stair, where he kept some tools and other things, made choice of some of them, went up—and then down along the wall to the oak door. There was no time to get a new staple to it, but he remembered that he had seen another in the same post, a little lower down: if he could get that out and drive it in close beside the remains of the other, so as to receive the bolt of the lock, and mask the

broken parts he could not remove, that would be the main thing effected, and the rest would be comparatively easy! All the way he heard the masons pounding at the wall: it must surely have been built with cement and be of considerable thickness.

Ho reached the place, and passing through two of the doors opened the last a little way, and peeped: they had not yet got through the wall, for no light was visible! He made haste to restore everything as nearly as possible to the position in which he saw them when first he entered — which was not difficult, seeing there were but two articles of furniture in the chamber, and a few papers on the cover of the bureau. And as he lingered the huge blows were falling, like those of a ram on the wall of a besieged city, of which he was the whole garrison. They were close by him on the other side, shaking the whole place. The plaster was falling in his sight, but no ray came through. He stepped into the press and drew the door after him. With his last glance behind he saw a stone fall from the middle of the wall into the room, and a faint gleam of light enter.

He hurried away. The demolition would go on much faster now that they had pierced the wall; but he hoped before the opening was large enough to let the earl through, he would have made good, or seemingly good, what he had destroyed, and be out of the reach of suspicion. Attacking the spare staple therefore with a strong lever, he succeeded in drawing it from the post, and then drove it in beside the other, so as to take its place and the bolt, his noises hidden in those of the workmen, for he took care to time his blows to theirs.

When he found that it would bear a good push, he let it alone, and having taken care to leave no signs of his work or his passing presence that could be helped, turned away, and ran down to the chapel: there he must see what could be done to prevent any notice that the dust of the dead had been disturbed! He gathered from the floor behind the altar all the dust he could sweep up, and laid it on it as nearly as he could in the form of the little heap they had removed; then on the bed restored, with the dust of the bedding, a little of the outline as it had struck him when he first saw it. This done, he closed the door as it had been when he pushed it off its broken hinge, and would have ascended, but bethought him that the slab lay lifted from its place in the floor of the passage, and might betray the knowledge he so much desired to conceal. It took him but a moment to replace it, and sweep the loose earth into the crypt. Then he went up the stair, out of breath with eagerness rather than haste.

As he passed the oak door he laid his ear to it: some one was in the room. The sounds of battering had ceased, but the lid of the bureau slipped from some hand and fell with a loud bang. The wall could not be half down yet: the earl must have got into the place as soon as it was practicable! Donal hastened away: the earl might come through any moment; and though he had a better right to be there than he, Donal would not have liked at all to be found there by the earl.

The moment he was out he put the slab in the opening, and secured it there with a strut between it and the opposite side of the recess, so that it could

not be pushed out from the inside. Then, as there was no time to fill up the possible crevices around it, he made haste to close the shutters and draw the curtains of the room, that no light might pass. It was possible that the earl, even although he knew of the other way into the chapel, had never discovered this ; but if he had, or if he found the stair in the wall now for the first time, and coming up saw no light, and found the stone immovable, he would, Donal hoped, be satisfied that it had never been displaced. He then went to Lady Arctura's room. She was there.

"I have a great deal to tell you," he said hurriedly. "I have been keeping several things from you, meaning to tell you another time, and at this moment I cannot. I dread too lest the earl should find me with you !"

"Why should you mind that ?" said Arctura, with just the slightest reddening of her pale cheek.

"Because he is suspicious about the lost room, and I must make haste to close up the entrance to it."

"You would not surely shut him in, if he be there ?"

"No ; there is no possibility of that. He has this morning had another way broken into it — at least I am all but sure. Please take care not to let him see that you know anything about it. Davie thinks he is set on finding the lost room : I think he knows all about it. You can ask him what he has been doing, on the ground of what Davie says."

"I understand : I hope I shall be able to steer clear of anything like a story, for if I stumble into

one, then I must tell everything! but I will be careful."

"I have so much to tell you! Come to Mrs. Brook's room to-night, my lady, if you want to hear."

In the afternoon he was in the schoolroom as usual. Davie was full of the news of the curious little place his father had discovered by knocking down the wall; but, he said, if that was the lost room, he did not think it was worth making such a fuss about: it was nothing at all but a big kind of closet, with just an old desk-kind of thing in it! Davie little thought what there was in that closet, in that bureau, capable of affecting his history, and his knowledge and regard of the same!

Arctura thought it better not to go near the place, but, anxious as she was, knowing nothing of the other entrance or where it was, except that, having seen the oak door, she thought it might be through there, she yet kept quiet till dinner-time, her uncle had invited her that day to dine with him, intending probably to make the more or less explanatory statement which presently her questions drew from him. She did not think it would do to show an indifference she did not feel about what had been going on.

"What were you doing this morning, uncle?" she asked; "there was such a noise of thumping and knocking in the castle! It seemed where I sat as if it shook its very foundations. Davie said you must be *determined*, he thought, to find out the lost room; is it really that, uncle?"

"Nothing of the kind, my love," he answered. "You will see what it is as soon as they have cleared

away the stones and mortar. I do hope they will not spoil the great stair carrying it down : there is no other way of getting rid of it. — I suppose you came up the back stair ? ”

“ I did ; it *is* the nearer way from the room I am in for the present. But tell me then what you are doing.”

“ Simply this, my dear ; before my wife, your aunt, died, we had made a plan together for throwing that closet behind my room on the stair into it, in the shape of recesses. In preparation for that I had a wall built across the middle of the closet, to make two recesses of it, and also to act as a buttress to make up for weakening the wall of the room by opening two such large archways in it, lest that should affect the house above it. Then your aunt died, and I hadn't the heart to do anything more with it. So one half of the little room behind remained cut off altogether. But I had built up in it an old bureau containing papers of some consequence ; you see it was not convenient to remove it ; it was heavy, and was intended to remain in the same position after the arches were opened. So I left it, thinking it was only for a few days. Now I want some of those papers, and the wall has had to come down again.”

“ But, uncle, what a pity ! ” said Arctura. “ Why not open the arches ? The recesses would have been so nice in that room ? ”

“ I am very sorry I did not think of asking what you would like done about it, my child ; but I never thought of your taking any interest in the matter. No doubt the idea was a good one, but my wife being gone with whom only I had talked over the thing, I

lost all my interest in it. You will observe, I was only restoring what I myself disarranged — not meddling with anything you had done or anything that belonged to the condition of the castle before. But we can easily build it up again, and open the arches now.”

“No, no, uncle! if you do not care about it, neither do I. But now you have the masons here, why should we not go on, and make a little search for the lost room?”

“As to that, my dear, we might pull down the whole castle to find it and be none the wiser. Why, the building up of that half of the little closet sort of place I have just had disclosed again may have given rise to the whole story!”

“Surely, uncle, the legend is very much older than that!”

“It may be; but you cannot be sure. Once it was a going, it would immediately begin to cry back to a more and more remote age for its origin. You cannot prove that any one ever spoke of it before the date of the building of that foolish wall.”

“No, I cannot certainly! But, surely, there are some who remember hearing the story long before that!”

“It may be; but nothing is so treacherous as a memory in the face of a general belief. And I would advise you, if you care to live in peace, and for my sake if not for your own, to hold your tongue about it. We should immediately and all at once have the place besieged and infested with antiquarians, and ghost-hunters, and all that canaille — not to mention the insects whose instinct is old family-papers and the

secrets of ancient families, that they may expose their pleasant vices to the vulgar gaze, and encourage inferiors to ape the crimes of their betters with a worse grace and worse consequences."

Here, probably catching sight of some expression of disgust, not successfully reduced to one of indifference, on the face of his niece, he laughed an unpleasant laugh and said :

" You need not grudge your old uncle a humorous word now and then, even if it be a little cynical. He is not altogether a bad fellow."

The next morning Arctura went to see the alteration, and found the whole of the rubbish already cleared away. She opened the door, and there was the little room nearly twice its former size, and the two bureaus standing side by side with each other. Donal had seen the place some hours before her, and had found the one he had left open shut and locked ; he knew there were reasons. She peeped into the cupboard at the end of the room, but had no suspicion there was a door in the back of it.

That morning she made up her mind that she would go no farther at present in the affair of the chapel : she could not except she were prepared to break with her uncle ! She would consult her man of business the first time she saw him, but the thing could wait, and she would not send for him !

When she saw Donal in the evening she told him her resolve, and he could not say she was wrong. There was no necessity for opposing her uncle in such a matter — there might soon come things in which she must oppose him ! Donal told her how he had got into the closet from behind, and the story of what

happened the night before, and had led, he supposed, to the opening of the place. He did not tell her of the unsent letter he had found, any more than of the words her uncle had dropped in his wrath concerning the social position of his son. The time might come when he would see it imperative to do so, but in the meantime he shrunk from making the relation in which Arctura stood to her uncle, her sole remaining relative of the former generation, more uncomfortable than it already was; and he did not think it likely such a woman as she would consent to marry for the sake of a title a man who had shown himself such as her cousin; — and indeed, so far as he knew, there had been no sign that the cousin himself had any desire to implement the arrangement understood to have been made between the two brothers; when such a danger showed itself it might be time to interfere; but now he was not sure that, for the mere sake of the succession to an empty title, in itself nothing or next nothing, he was bound to speak. The branch of the family which could produce such scions, might very well be itself a false graft on a true stem! He must be sure it was his business before he moved in the matter. In the meantime they must leave the chapel alone, nor any more set foot in it, till such time as Lady Arctura was prepared to take her own way with it.

Donal had the suspicion, and it grew upon him, not only that the earl had known of the chapel and its conditions for a long time, but that it was not safe for such a man to have such a secret — to know more of the inward facts and relations of the house than the rest who lived in it. This was not in reality the

case, however: the earl might imagine he was the sole possessor of the ancient secret, but there were three more in the house who knew it as well as he — one of them perhaps better: this would be no weak safeguard against any wrong use the earl might be tempted to make of his knowledge. Had Donal been asked, or had he asked himself, what he could possibly fear from the earl, he could not have answered even himself in any way approaching the definite. He *feared* — but the verb was intransitive, not the transitive one.

Things again went on very quietly for a time. Lady Arctura grew better, continued her studies, and made excellent progress — would have worked harder than Donal would let her: of all things he hated forcing — even with the best good will of the human plant itself. He believed in a holy, unhasting growth, in which God's ways had God's time to be sacredly wrought out. In argument afterwards on the matter, people would sometimes say to him — "That may be all very well in the abstract; but in these days of hurry, so, a young fellow will be left in the lurch! The thing will never work!" — "For your ends," Donal would quietly answer, "it certainly will not work, but your ends are not those of the universe!" — "They are not!" if the opponent answered, "They are the success of the boy." — "That is one of the ends of the universe," Donal would reply; "but you will doubtless have your reward, and succeed in thwarting it for a season. For my part, I decline to be one in a conspiracy against the design of the creator: I would fain die loyal!"

He was of course laughed at, with no small admixture of contempt, as an extravagant enthusiast — though for what he was enthusiastic they found it hard to say : it was certainly not for education, they admitted, seeing he would even do what he could sometimes to keep a pupil back instead of urging him on. He did not seem to care to make the best of him ! It was true he did not *seem* to care ; for Donal's best was so many miles ahead of their best that it was below their horizon altogether. If there be any relation between time and the human mind, every hastening of human process whether in religion or a matter of the mere intellect, is, I will not say *fatal*, for the redeeming God is at the hearts of his creatures to set right their failures and wrong-doings, but an obstruction and a retardation of his plan, which is the final best of the individual first, and next of the societies of men, as a necessary result ; for as God is one, the individual is that which is like him, and not a corporate body of individuals, still less a congeries to whose coherence individuality is an obstruction.

Lady Arctura's old troubles were gradually receding and fading into the limbo of vanities. Sometimes, however, and that in general when her health was worse, they would come in upon her like a flood — as if, after all, God was but the self-loving being the evil spirit of a false theology represented him — a being from whom no loving heart could but recoil with a holy instinct of dislike ; and she of a nature so unregenerative that she could not receive the God in whom the priests and elders of her people believed. Yet sometimes, even in the midst of profoundest

wretchedness from such a cause, a sudden flush from that nature which Jesus has told us to study, and the modern pharisee to avoid as dangerous, would break like gentlest strongest sunrise through the hellish fog, and she would feel a power upon her as from the heart of such a God as she would give her very self to believe in, and she would cast herself before him in speechless adoration — not of his greatness, for of that she felt little, but of his loving kindness, and the gentleness that was making her great. Then she would care only for God and his Christ, nothing for what men said about him, let them call themselves what they pleased, claim for themselves what they would: the Lord never meant his lambs to be under the tyranny of any, even his own Church! Then would God appear not only true, but real; and to the heart of the human she must cling, and there rest. The corruption of all religion comes from leaving the human and God as the causing Humanity for something else imagined holier — which is indeed but a new idol, such as the heart of man that knows not the heart of the Father will forever be making. What but a human reality could the heart of man love! and what else was she offered but in Jesus the absolutely human! Of the mischievous fictions of theology the representation that Jesus has two natures is of the falsest.

By and by came the breath of a change over the contented course of things at the castle. After the absence of months, reappeared Lord Forgue — cheerful, manly, on the best terms with his father, and willing to be on still better with his cousin. He had left the place a mooning youth; he came back, so far

as the first glance could read him, an agreeable man of the world — better in carriage, better in manners better in temper ; full of remark not devoid of anecdote and personal observation both of nature and human nature ; attentive to both his father and his cousin, but not too attentive ; jolly with Davie, distant with Donal, yet polite to him.

Donal could hardly receive the evidence of his senses concerning the change that had passed upon him : he would have wondered more if he had known every factor that had borne a part in producing it : some of them were for time to reveal ! He shook hands with him, at times, and seemed in every motion to say that it should not be his fault if the follies of his youth remained unforgotten. He had even an airy carriage with him that sat well upon him ; but none the less Donal felt that the charm which at first attracted him had vanished. He was more than doubtful that he had been making progress down hill, and that where as he had been only negatively, he was now consciously and positively untrue.

Donal knew that in what he did he had a purpose ! He therefore could not make the return to his advances that he would have been glad to be able to do. He felt there was a wall of brass between them, which it was impossible for any intercourse of a genuine kind to pass. Nor was it long before some part of his design began to show itself. Gradually, with undefined gradations doubtless he thought, but they were not unmarked of Donal, or perhaps of Arctura, just as if the man he now was found himself under influences of attraction towards her of which the boy he had been was unaware, he began to show himself

not indifferent to the charms of his fair cousin — and indeed make some revelation of wonder that he had not felt them long before. He saw and professed concern that her health was not quite such as it had been, although in reality it was better; sought her in her room when she did not appear at lunch or dinner; took an interest in the books she was reading, and even in her studies with Donal which she carried on just as before; and, in a word, behaved like a good brother-cousin, who would not be sorry to be something more.

And now, strange to say, the earl began to appear occasionally at the family table, and, apparently in consequence of this, Donal was requested rather than invited to take his meals with them — not altogether to his satisfaction, seeing he could read a book while he ate alone, and could besides get through more quickly, saving much time for things of greater consequence than eating. His presence made it easier for Lord Forgue to show himself the gentleman and man of the world he now set up for; and indeed he brought manners to the front in which, from the point of manners there was very little to be desired. Yet he sometimes faced a card he did not mean to show: who that is not absolutely true can escape it? There was condescension in the politeness he showed Donal; and this, had there been nothing else, would have been enough to revolt Arctura, but the fact was that she felt him altogether, though she would not so have expressed herself perhaps, as a man of outside — felt that in him you did not see the man he was, but the nearest approach he could make to the man he would be taken for. He was gracious, dignified, attentive,

amusing, accurate, ready — everything but true ; his outside everything but what it was meant for — a revelation of that which he was inside. Yet it was that too only that he did not mean it to be. He was a man dressed in a man, and his dress was a revelation of much that he was, at the time he intended it to show much that he was not. For no man can help unveiling himself, however long he may escape detection. Neither is there anything covered that shall not be revealed. Things were meant to come out, and be read, and understood in the face of the universe. The soul of every man shall be as a book to be read of wise eyes — all its history, all its strife, all its victory, written in the pages thereof! — and oh, what a different book will it be thus read, from the biography that may have chanced to be written of it on the earth, where the very understanding of the man was chiefly a misunderstanding, where by some he was perhaps thought a God when on the very point of being eaten up of worms, or was by some taken for a fool when he was teaching the deepest wisdom. Each and all must one day be seen and known in the light. Well for those who are humble enough and true enough not to shrink from the exposure of even their faults and sins — who hate them so much themselves that they would have them have no quarter.

He had been in Edinburgh a part of the time, away in England another part, and had many things to tell of the people he had seen, and the sports he had taken a share in. He had developed and cultivated a vein of gentlemanly satire, showing himself keen to perceive and analyze the peculiarities which are in general weaknesses, of others ; judging them all, how-

ever, as a matter of course, only by the poor social standard of the society of the day ; questioned concerning them from a wider, a human point of view, he was unable to give any genuine account of them. Donal saw, more and more clearly, that the man was a gulf filled with a thin mist that prevented you from seeing to the bottom of it. He showed himself more and more submissive to the judgment of Arctura, and seemed to welcome that of his father, to whom he was now as respectful as such a father could wish a son to be.

CHAPTER XXXVII.

LORD FORGUE AGAIN.

TWO years before this time Lady Arctura had been in the way of riding a good deal, but after an accident to a favorite horse, for which in part she blamed herself, she had never cared to ride again, and had, though much in the open air, seldom gone beyond the grounds, except when she went to church, or to see Miss Carmichael. Partly because her uncle was of no great standing in his own rank, and for other reasons, chiefly personal, she had never visited much; and when mental troubles began to assail her, and were increased by the false prescriptions of the soul-doctor she had called in, she withdrew more and more into herself, and avoided the company which at one time she would have enjoyed. And although she had now greatly recovered, she did not yet care to move in the society of the neighborhood, and had not again taken to horse-exercise. For a time she constantly declined to ride with Forgue. In vain he offered his horse, assuring her that Davie's pony was quite able to carry him; she would not accept his offer. But at last one day, mostly from fear of doing injury to a bettering nature she consented, and so enjoyed the ride, felt indeed so much the better for it, that she did not so positively as before decline to allow her cousin to get for her a horse fit to carry her;

and Forgue, taking the remainder for granted, was fortunate enough, with the help of the factor, Mr. Graeme, to find a beautiful creature, just of the sort to please her; and almost at the sight of him she confirmed the purchase.

This put Forgue in great spirits, and much contentment with himself. For he did not doubt that, having thus gained unlimited opportunity of having her alone with him he would soon withdraw her entirely from the absurd influence which, to his dismay, he discovered that his enemy, as to himself he always called Donal, had in his absence gained over her. He ought not to have been such a fool, he said to himself, as to leave the poor child to the temptations naturally arising in such a dreary solitude! But he noted with satisfaction that "that horrid young woman, the parson's daughter," seemed to have been banished the house: she was just as bad — filling her head with all sorts of nonsense! And now that, *having got rid of the folly that for a while possessed him*, he was prepared to do his duty by his cousin and the house to which they both belonged, he would use in earnest the fascinations he had by experience learned to believe he possessed in a truly exceptional degree! First of all he would take her education in hand himself, and give his full energy to what was lacking in it! She should speedily learn, to begin with, the contrast between the attentions of a gentleman and those of a clotpoll!

He had himself in England improved in his riding as well as his manners, and now knew how a gentleman at least, if not how a man ought to behave to the beast that carried him, so that there was not

much of the old danger of offending Arctura by his treatment of him! More than all, having ridden a good deal with the ladies of the house where he had been visiting, he was now able to give Arctura a good many hints, the value of which she could not fail to discover in the improvement of her seat, her hand, her courage; and he knew there was no readier way to the confidence and gratitude of his cousin than that of showing her a more excellent way in anything about which she cared enough to wish to do it well. He knew himself able likewise to praise her style with an honesty that was not feigned, therefore had force.

But if he thought that by teaching her to ride, he could make her forget the man who had been teaching her to live, he was merely mistaken in the woman he set himself to captivate. He did not love her even in the way he called loving, else he might have been less confident; but he found her very pleasing. Invigorated by the bright frosty air, the life of the animal under her, the exultation of rapid motion, and enjoying the change for the better in her cousin who was now a pleasant companion to her, she by and by appeared more in health, more merry and full of life, than perhaps ever in her life before. He put it all down to his success as a man upon the heart of a woman. He could not suspect how little of it was owing to him, how much to the fact that she could now think of the father of spirits without fear, almost without doubt — think of him as at the root of every delight of the world, at the heart of the horse she rode, in the wind that blew joy into her as she swept through its yielding bosom — think of him as altogether loving and true, the veritable father of Jesus

Christ, as like him as like could be like, more like him than any one other in the universe could be like another — like him as only eternal son can be like eternal father. No wonder that with this well of living water in her heart she should be glad — merry even, and ready for anything her horse could do!

Flying across a field in the very wildness of pleasure, her hair streaming behind her, and her pale face glowing, she would now and then take such a jump as Forgue would declare he dared not face in cold blood: he did not know how far from cold her blood was! He began to wonder that he could have been such a fool as neglect her for — “well, never mind!” — and to feel something that was very like love, and was indeed great admiration; but for the scathing brand of his own past, he might have loved her as a young man may love even without being as yet the most exalted of mortals: for in love we are beyond our ordinary selves. The deep thing in us is peering up into the human air, and is of God, however much we may do to strangle it after it has appeared, by the devil’s own treatment of it: even love cannot live long in the mephitic air of a selfish and low nature; it sinks again down below.

But Forgue was afraid of Arctura. When a man is conscious of wrong, knows that in his history which would draw a terrible smudge over the picture he presents to the eyes of her he would please — please more than would be possible if she knew what he knows, it is little wonder if he is afraid of her. He is able to make every allowance in the matter for himself; but he is not sure she will be equally liberal. And before Forgue lay a gulf he could pass only

on the narrow plank of her favor : might he but be sure of getting over that, he “ would jump the life to come ! ” The more he admired her, the more determined he grew ; and the more satisfied he became with what he counted improvement in himself, the more determined he became that he would for no poor scruples of worldly judgment, forego his happiness ; and so long as the world was kept in the dark as to one thing, it might know what it would of all besides ! If but once he had the position of rightful owner of the property, who was there that even knowing, would care to dispute his right to the title ? Besides all this, he was by no means *certain* that his father had not merely uttered a threat. Surely if it were a fact, he would, even in rage diabolic, have kept it to himself !

Impetuous, and accustomed to what he counted success, he did not continue his attentions to his cousin very long without beginning to make more indubitable advances towards the end, on which, if not his heart, at least the organ wherein dwell self-love and cupidity, was set. But, all the time, Arctura, uninfluenced by the ways outside, none of her judging faculties warped, so none of her perceptive faculties sharpened, by intercourse with the low world of ambition and poor intrigue, her instincts rendered more nice and exacting by religion, which, however mistaken its conceptions, always when genuine tends towards personal delicacy and purity of judgment, never imagined, knowing in a vague way how he had been carrying himself before he went, that he would approach her on any ground but that of cousinship and a childhood of shared sports.

She had not been made acquainted with what had

passed about him and Eppie, but she had seen so me thing herself of what was going on, and when Eppie was dismissed had requested an explanation, as she had a right to do, from her housekeeper, contenting herself at the same time with rather undefined replies. She had seen too that Donal was far from pleased with the young lord — and from the whole knew well enough, and that without much reflection, that Forgue had been behaving badly, and believed he knew that she knew it. No small part indeed of her kindness to him now arose from the fact that he was or had been in disgrace: she was sorry for him. Without speculating on what had been wrong or what ought in consequence to have confronted the wrong, she presumed everything was over that ought to be over, but had never dreamed he was now daring approach her in the way of love-making, after what had so lately passed.

He must know she would be annoyed, as a matter of course, at such a thing! she would have said had a suspicion of the fact occurred to her. As to whether, had things been well between them, she would have done her part willingly towards carrying out the reported desire of her father and that of her uncle, she had not had occasion to ascertain, or any leaning to ask of herself; the thing had always seemed so entirely in the future as to preclude present consideration.

By and by, however, she began to perceive that she had been allowing him too much freedom except she was prepared to hear something that would demand answer. So the next day, much to his surprise only at first, she declined to go out with him.

It was the stranger that they had not had a ride together for a fortnight, the weather having been unfavorable ; now when a day came more than ordinarily lovely because of the season into which it broke like a smile from an estranged friend, she would not go with him ! He quickly became annoyed and then alarmed, fearing some adverse influence. They were sitting in the breakfast-room, a small room next the library, into which Donal had just gone.

“Why will you not ride with me, Arctura ?” said Forgue reproachfully ; “are you not well ?”

“I am quite well,” she answered.

“It is such a lovely day,” he pleaded.

“But I am not in the mood. There are other things in the world beside riding. Ever since you got Larkie for me, I have been wasting my time riding too much. I have been learning next to nothing.”

“Oh, bother learning ! what have you to do with learning ! I’m sure I’ve had enough of it, and wish it had been less ! Your health is the first thing.”

“I do not think so. It would be better to learn some things even with the utter loss of health. Besides, a certain amount of learning is as good for the health as horse exercise — not to mention that I have serious objections to be a mere animal with the finest health in the world.”

“What learning is it you are so fond of ? Perhaps I could help you with it.”

“Thank you, Forgue,” she answered, laughing a little. “But I have a very good master already ; Davie and I are reading Greek and mathematics with Mr. Grant.”

Forge's face flushed.

"I ought to know quite as much of both as he does!" he said.

"*Ought* perhaps! But you do not, because you never studied much."

"I know enough to teach you."

"Yes, but I know enough not to let you try!"

"Why?"

"Because you can't teach."

"How do you know that?"

"Because you do not love either Greek or mathematics, and no one who does not love can teach."

"That is some schoolmaster nonsense! If I don't love Greek enough to teach *it*, I love you enough to teach *you*," said Forge. "Why then deprive me of your company to learning it?"

"You are my riding-master," said Arctura; "Mr. Grant is my master in Greek and mathematics."

Forge just managed to strangle in time an imprecation upon Donal. He tried to laugh, but there was not a laugh inside him.

"Then you won't ride to-day?" he said.

"I think not," replied Arctura.

She ought to have said she would not; but some shrink from the seeming hardness of *no*. It opened the whole question again.

"I cannot see what should induce you to let that fellow have the honor of teaching you!" said Forge after a smoking-pause. "He is a dull, pedantic, ill-bred man!"

"He is my friend," said Arctura, and raising her head, she looked her cousin in the eyes, as much as to say, "Do not let me hear that again."

“I assure you, you are quite mistaken in him,” he said.

“I do not ask your opinion of him,” returned Arctura coldly. “I merely acquaint you with the fact that he is my friend.”

“Here’s the devil and all to pay!” thought Forgue. “Who would have imagined such a spirit in the girl! I have my work cut out for me with a vengeance!” But he saw he must not go farther.

“I beg your pardon,” he said; “I did not mean to make myself disagreeable. You see him with different eyes from mine.”

“And with better opportunity of judging!”

“He has never interfered with you as he has with me,” said Forgue foolishly, for his anger was rising.

“But indeed he has!”

“He has! Confound his impertinence! How?”

“He won’t let me study as much as I want. — Now tell me how he has interfered with you.”

Forgue would rather not enter into explanations.

“We won’t quarrel about such a trifle,” he said, attempting a tone of gayety, which immediately grew serious. “We who have so long been so much to each other” —

But there he stopped.

“I do not — I am not willing to think I do know what you mean?” said Arctura. “I thought, after what had passed — I would rather not allude to such things — but” —

In her turn she ceased, remembering that he had really said nothing.

“Jealous!” said Forgue to himself; “that is a good sign!” — then to Arctura:

“ I see he has been talking against me ! ”

“ If you mean Mr. Grant, you mistake. I do not believe he cares enough about you ever to mention you ! ”

“ I know better ! ”

He was getting deeper and deeper into the mire.

“ He never did to me. But I have myself seen enough, I am ashamed to say, to prevent me from ever supposing it possible you would ” —

Here she found it necessary to stop again.

“ If you mean,” he said, plucking up his fast failing courage, “ that unfortunate piéce of boyish folly — you know I was but a boy ! ”

“ How many months ago ? ” said Arctura ; but Forgue saw no need for precision.

“ I assure you,” he said, “ on the word of a gentleman, there is nothing between us now. It is all over ; and more than that, I am heartily ashamed of it.”

“ On what grounds ? ” Arctura was on the point of asking ; but she felt she had no right to question him, except she were ready to hear him, and held her peace.

A pause of a few seconds followed. it seemed to both like as many minutes.

Forgue broke it, for it was unbearable.

“ Then you *will* come out with me to-day ? ”

But now she knew her danger yet better than before ! At once and decidedly she declined.

“ No,” she said ; “ I will not.”

“ Well,” he returned, with simulated coolness, “ this is, I must say, rather cavalier treatment ! — to throw a man over who has loved you so long, for sake of a Greek lesson ! ”

“How long, pray, have you loved me?” said Arctura, growing angry at his untruthfulness. “Ever since I was born? or since I came of age? or since you got tired of poor Eppie? I was very willing to help you to pass a pleasant time in the country, but as you seem to think I have been encouraging you, I am sorry it is no longer possible. I am a little particular as to the sort of man I should like to marry, and you are not up to the mark, Lord Forgue!”

“And Mr. Grant is?”

“He has neither asked me, nor rendered it impossible I should listen to him.”

“You punish me pretty sharply, my lady, for a slip of which I told you I was ashamed!” said Forgue, biting his lip, which always suffered severely when things were going ill with him. “It was the merest” —

“I do not want to hear anything about it,” said Arctura, sternly. “If you had set your heart on the property, which I do not doubt you think ought to go with the title, you were unfortunate in imagining me one who did not care for the proprieties of life! You had better go and have your gallop: you may have my horse if you prefer him to your own.”

She would not have spoken as she did, had he not roused her indignation by his contempt of Donal: she felt honesty required her to make common cause with one to whom she owed so much.

Forgue turned on his heel and left the room. Arctura took up her books and walked to the schoolroom, passing Forgue on her way: he had been lingering to see whether she would in reality go to the schoolroom. Surely she had been but attempting

to pique him ! It was hard to believe she did not wish to go with him — preferred a Greek lesson from the clown Grant to a ride with Lord Forgue ! No Graeme could be capable of such vileness !

When he saw her pass towards the schoolroom with her books in her hand, he did not know what to think. For the present, however, he would show no offence, and in sign of taking the thing coolly, he would ride her horse.

But, alas, the poor animal had to suffer for his ill-humor ! The least motion of Larkie that displeased him, and he was ready for nothing but displeasure, as one doing, and imagining himself to suffer wrong, put him in a rage, and disregarding all he had learned, he treated the horse so foolishly and so tyrannically that he brought him home quite lame, and knew, to his additional annoyance, that he had thus himself put an end for some time at least, to any feeblest hope of riding with her. Instead, however, of going and telling her what he had done, he put Larkie in the stable, and sent for the farrier.

A week passed, and then another ; and he said nothing more about riding. But in that week a furious jealousy mastered him. For a time he scorned to give place to it because of the insult it was to himself to allow it true, but gradually it grew active in him. This country bumpkin, this cow-herd, this man of spelling books and grammars, of Greek and mathematics, was poisoning his cousin's mind against him ! What a thing to contemplate ! Of course he said to himself, he was not so silly as to imagine for a moment she cared for him ! That she would disgrace herself by falling in love with a fellow just escaped

from the plough-tail! She was a Graeme, and that was enough! She never could be such a traitor to her blood as that! If only he had not been so silly as to fall in love with a vulgar little thing that had not an idea in her head, and got at last to be so unpleasant — positively disgusting with her love-making: nothing would please her but be always hugging and kissing! That was how the man spoke to himself of the girl he had so lately been in love with!

That wretched schoolmaster! Though of course she would not dream of falling in love with him, he might yet succeed with her so far as to prevent her from falling in love with him! Whatever might be a man's attractions, they could not make their way against certain kinds of prepossession, especially in a girl who was a sort of a saint to begin with: There was no standing against religious prejudices! He must point out to his father the necessity of getting rid of the fellow! The governor had a fancy that he was doing well with Davie; but what revolutionary notions he would put into him! he was certain to unfit him for taking his place in the real world. And if it came to that, why not send the two away together somewhere till things were settled? If he were dismissed without good reason shown it would make matters worse!

He did mention the matter to his father, but the earl thought it would be better to win over Donal to his side. He counselled his son that there were Grants of good family, and that besides the pride of every Highlander was such as to brook no assumption of superiority: he would but make of him an implacable enemy if he did or said anything to hurt

him. His lordship did not think of what he had himself said and done, or reflect that, if Donal had been of the sort he supposed, he must have left the Castle long ago. There was indeed only one thing that would have made it impossible for Donal to remain, and that they had never presumed to do — namely, to interfere between him and his pupil, or prescribe to him what he was to do and not to do with him.

Forgue did not argue with his father : he had given that up : but he could not do what he desired of him ; neither, if he had told him all that had passed between them, would the earl have judged it possible to cultivate any appearance even of friendship with him. For the present he would just let things slide, and and stand by and watch.

One step only he took : he began to draw to himself the good graces of Miss Carmichael. He did not know how little she could serve him when he called upon her father. After that they had a good deal of communication with each other. The lady, without being consciously insincere, flattered the gentleman, and so speedily gained his esteem and confidence. “Of a good family,” on the mother side, she was born with capabilities for taking on the manners of the upper classes, and had grown up fit to adorn any society, as her common father said ; and with a keen appreciation of the superior rights and dignity of the aristocracy, she was well able to flatter the prejudices she honored and shared in. Careful not to say a word against his cousin, she made him feel more and more that the chief danger to him lay in the influence of Donal. She fanned thus the flame

of his jealousy and hate of the man whom he now thought he had disliked from the first, and whom he had soon learned to hate, first, because he came between him and his wrath, next, because he came between him and his "love," and last because he now threatened to come between him and the life that alone was worth his living, and threatened to be the ruin of his fortunes.

But after all, what could he do? If only Davie would fall ill, and have to be taken for change of air! But Davie was always in splendid health and spirits.

By and by he began to confide in Miss Carmichael with regard to Arctura. Now that he saw himself in danger of being thwarted, he fancied himself more in love with her than he was, and indeed did think less for a time of the fact that in her lay his only prospect of deliverance from the future, threatening him with the frightful alternative of labor or poverty. And as he had got more familiarized with the idea of his false birth, although even to himself he did not choose to confess he believed it, he made less and less of it, which would have showed to another, though it did not to himself, that he really did believe it. In further sign of the same, he would make no inquiry into the matter—did not once question his father further about it. If it was true, he did not want to know it; and where was the blame in acting as if he knew nothing about it, so long as he did not know it to be true? People must take for granted what was commonly believed about their birth! At last, and the last was not long in arriving, he all but ceased to trouble himself about it.

When he hinted to his father his genuine fear that

he was not destined to succeed with Arctura, the earl laughed at the foolish doubt, but in certain of his moods he contemplated the thing as an awful possibility. It was not that he loved his sons much, though he loved Davie more than Fergue; but the only way in which those who recognize that they are on the road to the grave, can fancy themselves holding on to the things of this life is through their children. Then he loved in a troubled, self-reproachful way, the memory of their mother, and through her cared for his children more than he knew: they were to him as much his children, and as fit to succeed him, as if he had been legally married to their mother. As to the relation in which they stood to society, he did not care for that, so long as it remained undiscovered. He rather enjoyed — I had almost said heartily enjoyed the idea of stealing a march on society, and seeing from the other world the sons he had left at such a disadvantage behind him, ruffling it, in spite of foolish law, with the best of them, and arrogating the place which the fools of society, had they but known, would never have granted them. Thus from the grave he would still be keeping his foot on the neck of his enemy! — for he had always been an enemy to law, and would steal any victory over it he could. Nor would he ever have been such a fool as utter the truth to his son, not to say in the presence of Donal, had he not been under the combined influence of the fading fumes of evil drugs and fierce wrath at an opposition threatening ruin to his most cherished scheme.

And now Arctura avoided her cousin as much as she could — only she felt bound to remember that the house was hers, and she must not make him feel he

was not welcome to use what she could supply of the things of this world. They met at meals, and as nearly as she could she behaved as if nothing unpleasant had happened between them, and things were on the same footing as before he went away. But the sense that he was watching her, often prevented her from going out when otherwise she would.

One day when he had pretended to be gone for some hours, he met her walking in the park.

“You are very cruel to me, Arctura!” he said, with a mortification which owed its look of dejection in part to the effort he was making to hide his chagrin.

“Cruel?” returned Arctura, coldly; “I am not cruel. I would not willingly hurt any one.”

“You hurt me very much, not to let me have the least morsel of your society!”

“You see me every day at breakfast — at least when you are down in time, and every day at lunch and dinner when you choose to be present!”

“How can I bear to sit at the table near you, when you treat me with such coldness.”

“You compel me to do so, when you sit staring at me as if you would eat me, and look angry at every civil word I speak to another! If you are content to be my cousin, things will go smoothly enough; but if you are still set on what cannot be — once for all, it is of no use. I could never love you in that way! You care for none of the things I live for! I feel in your company as if I belonged to an altogether different state of existence; as if we had nothing worth calling an idea in common! You may think me hard, but it is much better we should understand each other. If you think, because my father left me the

property, you have a claim upon me, it is a claim I will never acknowledge. I would ten thousand times rather you had the property, and I were in my grave! You will easily find some one in every way better fitted for you!"

"I will do anything, learn anything you please!" said Forgue, with difficulty restraining his anger, for his heart was aching with disappointment, but willing to make a good case of it to his father.

"I know very well what such submission is worth," said Arctura. "I should be everything till we were married, and then nothing. But I will take care of that!"

She would not have spoken in just such a tone had she not been that day more than usually annoyed with his behavior to Donal, and at the same time particularly pleased with the calm, unconsciously dignified way in which Donal took it, casting it from him as the rock throws aside the sea wave, as if it did not concern him. The dull world has got the wrong phrase; it is he who resents an affront who pockets it! He who takes no notice flings it from him as a dirty thing he has nothing to do with. But therewith Forgue's contempt at once and his hatred towards Donal naturally went on growing.

It was a lovely day in spring.

"Please, Mr. Grant," said Davie, "may I have a holiday to-day?"

Donal looked up at him with a little wonder: the boy had never before made such a request.

"Certainly, Davie, you may!" he answered at once; "but I should like to know what you want it for."

“ I will soon tell you that, sir,” answered Davie. “ Arkie wants very much to have a ride to-day. She says Larkie — I gave him that name, to rhyme with *Arkie* — she says Larkie has not been out for a long time, and she does not want to go out with Fogue — I suppose he has been rude to her — and so she asked me if I would go with her on my pony.”

“ You will take good care of her, Davie ? ”

“ Oh, yes! I will take care of her ; and she will take care of me : that’s the way, isn’t it ? You need not be anxious about us, Mr. Grant. Arkie is a splendid rider, and she is pluckier than she used to be ! ”

Donal did, however — he could not have said why — feel a little anxious. He repressed the feeling as unfaithful, but still it returned. He could hardly go with them : there was no horse for him, and if he went on foot, he feared to spoil their ride. Besides, he had no desire to fan Fogue’s jealousy ! Also, he was so much afraid of presuming on Arctura’s regard for him, that he shrank from proposing anything ; he would always rather anything came from her first. So he went to his room, got a book, and strolled into the park, not even venturing to see them off ; the young lord might be about the stable, and draw false conclusions.

Fogue was not about the stable : he would, I think, have managed to prevent her from going. Larkie, though much better, was not yet cured of his lameness, and had not been much exercised. Arctura did not even know that he had been lame, or that he was now rather wild, and a pastern-joint not equal to his spirit. The boy, who alone was about the stable, either did not understand, or was afraid to speak, so

that she rode him in a danger of which she knew nothing. The consequence was that, jumping the merest little ditch in a field not far outside the park, they had a fall, and Larkie got up and trotted limping home, but his mistress lay where she fell. Davie, wild with misery, galloped home for help. From the height of the park Donal saw him tearing along, and knew that something must be amiss. He ran straight for the direction in which he came, saw him, climbed the wall, found his track through the field, and following it, came where Arctura lay.

The moment he saw her, his presence of mind returned. There was a little clear water in the ditch; he wet his handkerchief and bathed her face. She came to herself and smiled when she saw who was by her, and tried to rise, but fell back.

“I believe I am hurt!” she said. “I think Larkie must have fallen!”

Donal tried to raise her, that he might carry her home, but she moaned so that he saw she was too much hurt. Davie was gone for help: it would be better to wait! He pulled off his coat and laid it over her, then sitting down, raised her partly from the damp ground against his knees and in his arms; she let him do as he pleased. Then she seemed easier, and smiled, but did not open her eyes.

They had not long to wait. Several persons came running — among them Lord Forgue. He cast a look of hatred at Donal, and fell beside his cousin on his knees, taking her hand in his. Donal of course, did not move, and finding Forgue persisted in seeking to attract her attention to himself, saw it was for him to give orders.

“ My lady,” he said to the servants, “ is much hurt : “ one of you go off at once for the doctor ; the others bring a hand-barrow — I’ve seen one about the place — with the mattress of a sofa on it, and make haste.”

While waiting, he had been going over in his mind what ought to be done.

“ What have you to do with giving orders ! ” said Forgue.

“ Do as Mr. Grant tells you,” said Lady Arctura, without opening her eyes.

The men at once departed, running. Forgue rose from his knees, and with one look at Donal, walked slowly to a little distance, and stood gnawing his lip. There was silence for a time.

“ My lord,” said Donal, “ please run to the house, and fetch a little brandy for her ladyship ; I fear she has fainted.”

It was cutting to be sent about by the fellow, but what could Forgue do but obey ! He started at once and with tolerable speed. Then Arctura opened her eyes and smiled on Donal.

“ Are you suffering much, my lady ? ” he asked, greatly moved.

“ A good deal,” she answered. “ But I don’t mind it. Thank you for not leaving me. I have no more than I can bear. It is bad when I try to move.”

“ They will not be long, now,” he returned.

Again she closed her eyes and they were silent. Donal watching the cloud of suffering that every now and then would cross her face and lifting up his heart to the saviour of men.

At last he saw them coming with the extemporized litter, and behind them Mrs. Brooks, pale, but quiet

and ready, carrying the brandy, and with her Lord Forgue and one of the maids.

As soon as she came up, she stooped and spoke in a low voice to Donal, inquiring where the injury was, and Donal told her he feared it was her spine, but did not know. Then Mrs. Brooks put her hands under her, the maid took her feet, and Donal gently rising raised her body. They laid her on the litter and except a moan or two, and sometimes a look of pain that quickly passed, she gave no sign of suffering. Nothing to be called a cry escaped her. Once or twice she opened her eyes and looked up at Donal as he carried her, for he kept his place at her head, then as if satisfied closed them again. Before they reached the house the doctor met them, for they had to walk slowly so as not to shake her.

Forgue came behind in a devilish humor. He knew that his ill usage of Larkie and then his neither saying nor allowing anything to be said about it, must have been the cause of the accident, for he knew the horse was not fit to be ridden; but he felt also, with some satisfaction, for when self is first it simply makes devils of us, that if she had not made up her mind not to go out with him, it would not have happened for he would never have allowed her to mount Larkie. "Served her right!" he caught himself saying once, and was ashamed—but could not help presently saying it again. Self, I repeat, is as full of worms as it can hold, and is the damnedest friend a man can have.

She was carried to her room, and the doctor examined her, but could not say much. There were no bones broken, he said, but she must keep very quiet.

She gave a faint smile at the word, and a pitiful glance at Donal, whom the doctor had requested to remain when he turned the rest, all but Mrs. Brooks, out of the room. He ordered the windows to be darkened, she must if possible, sleep.

As Donal was following the doctor from the chamber, Lady Arctura signed to Mrs. Brooks that she wanted to speak to him. He came. She was weak now, and he had to bend over her to hear.

“You will come and see me, Mr. Grant?”

“I will indeed, my lady.”

“Every day?”

“Yes, most certainly,” he replied, with a glance at Mrs. Brooks.

She smiled, and so dismissed him. He went with his heart full.

A little away from the door of the room stood Forgue, evidently watching for him to come out. He had sent the doctor to his father. Donal passed him with a bend of the head, which he did not return; but followed him to the schoolroom.

“It is time this farce was over, Grant!” he said.

“Farce! my lord,” repeated Donal indignantly.

“These attentions of yours to my lady, I mean.”

“I have paid her no more attention than I would your lordship, had you required it,” answered Donal sternly.

“I don't doubt you would rather have me where her ladyship is now; that would be convenient enough! But I say again, it is time this were put a stop to, and stopped it shall be. Ever since you came you have been at work on the mind of that inexperienced girl with your humbug of religion—for

what ends of your own I do not care to inquire : and now you have half killed her by persuading her to go out with you instead of with me ! The brute was lame and not fit to ride, and you ought to have seen it ! ”

“ I had nothing to do with her going, my lord. She asked Davie to go with her, and he had a holiday for the purpose. ”

“ All very fine, but ” —

“ My lord, I have told you the truth because it was the truth, not to justify myself. You must be tolerably aware that your approbation is of no great value in my eyes ! But tell me one thing, my lord : if my lady’s horse was lame, how was it she did not know it and you did ? ”

By the question, Forgue thought Donal knew more than he did, and was taken aback.

“ It is time the place was clear of you ! ” he said.

“ I am your father’s servant, not yours, ” answered Donal. “ I will not trouble myself as to your pleasure concerning me. But I think it is only fair to warn you that though you cannot hurt me, nothing but honesty can take you out of my power. ”

Forgue turned on his heel, and without giving himself the trouble even to ask himself what the fellow could mean, went to his father, and told him he had no longer any doubt that Donal was prejudicing the mind of Lady Arctura against him. Not until it came out in the course of the conversation that followed did he give the earl to know of the accident she had had.

He professed himself greatly shocked, but got up with something almost like alacrity from the sofa on

which he had been lying, and went down to inquire after her. He would have compelled Mrs. Brooks to admit him had she been one atom less firm than she was, and Arctura would have been waked from a sleep invaluable to hear his condolences on her accident. But he had to return to his room without gaining anything.

If she were to go, the property would be his! — that is, if she died without leaving a will. He sent for his son and cautioned him over and over, insisting with vehemence even that he should do nothing to offend either her or any friend of hers; but should keep a fair behavior to all, and wait what might come: who could tell? It might prove a more serious thing than as yet it seemed!

Forgue tried to feel shocked at his father's cool speculation, but could not help allowing to himself that, if she was determined not to receive him as her husband, the next best thing in the exigency of affairs, would certainly be that she should leave a world for whose uses she was ill fitted, and go where she would be happier, leaving certain others to occupy the things she had no farther need of, and which all the time were more really theirs than hers. True, she was a pleasant thing to look upon, and if she had loved him, he would have preferred the property with her; but if it was to be his the other way, there was this advantage, that he would be left free to choose! — When one consents to evil, his progress in it may be of appalling rapidity!

In the meantime the poor girl lay suffering, — feverish and restless. When the night came, Mrs. Brooks would let no one sit up with her but herself.

The earl would have had her send for a "suitable nurse!" A friend of his in London would find her one! but she would not hear of it. And before the night was over she had more ground than she had expected to congratulate herself that it had been impossible for her to yield. For in her wanderings it was plain that the heart of her young mistress was more occupied with the tutor than her sense with the pain she was suffering: she spoke in her delirium, constantly desiring his presence that she might refer to him something that troubled her. "I know he can help me," she would say, "for God sent him to me. He is but a shepherd, I know, but the Lord was only a carpenter. That can be no reason for thinking less of him!" And Mrs. Brooks, though by no means clear from the prejudices of the rank with which so much of her life had been associated, prejudices which are by no means confined to the soil in which they are indigenuous, could not but allow to herself that a far more useful and noble life must be possible with a husband like Donal Grant than with one like Lord Forgue.

In the middle of the night she grew so unquiet, that the housekeeper, calling the maid she had put in a room near to watch while she was gone for a few minutes, ran like a bird to Donal's room, and asked him to come down. Donal had but partially undressed, thinking his help might be wanted, and was down almost as soon as she. Ere he came, however, she had dismissed the maid, and was waiting him. She thought, she said, that their patient would sleep better if she knew he was in the room.

Donal went to the bedside. She was moaning and

starting, sometimes opening her eyes, but distinguishing nothing. He laid his hand on hers, which was outside the counterpane. She gave a sigh, as of one relieved, a smile flickered over her face, and she lay still for some time without showing any further sign of suffering. Donal sat down beside her, and watched. The moment he saw her begin to be restless or appear distressed, he laid his hand upon hers, with the same result : she was immediately quiet, and slept as if she knew herself safe. When he saw her about to wake, he withdrew, having previously arranged it with her nurse that he would remain in the corridor till she called him again.

And so things went on, for nights not a few. He slept instead of working by himself when his duties with Davie were over, and at night, wrapt in his plaid, lay down in the corridor, ready the moment he was called. For even after Arctura began to get better, her nights were still troubled. The strange discoveries made in the castle haunted her sleep with their own dream variations, and her nights would have been far from suitably refreshing, and her recovery much retarded, had not Donal been near to make her feel — dare I not say *know* ? — that she was not abandoned to the terrors she had yet to pass through. For her restoration it was chiefly rest she needed ; but she had received a severe physical shock, and it was to the doctor doubtful if she would ever be strong again.

One night, the earl, wandering about the house in the anomalous and diseased condition of neither ghost nor genuine mortal, came suddenly in the corridor upon what he took for a huge animal lying in

wait to devour whoever might pass that way. He was not terrified, for he was accustomed to such things, and thought at first it did not belong to this world, but one of those to which drugs are the porters. When he was under the influence of these he had no doubt as to the reality of such visions, even when he knew they were quite invisible to other people; and even in his waking moments he had not quite of late begun to believe in them quite as much as in the things around him — or rather perhaps to disbelieve equally in both. He approached to see what it was, and stood staring down upon the somewhat undefined mass. Slowly it rose to its feet and confronted him, if confronting that could be called where both head and face remained so undefined! — Donal took care to keep his plaid over and around his head so that he should not identify him: if he took him for a robber, he would run! But he had hope in the probable condition of the earl — who in fact turned from him and walked away.

His lordship had his suspicions, however, and concluded that his son was right, that Donal was madly in love with his foolish niece, and she being ill, could rest nowhere but with the devotion of a savage, outside her door: if he did not take suitable precautions one way or another, the rascal might be too much for the gentleman! At his last interview with him he had begun not only to hate, but to fear the country lad! He had recognized that *he* feared nothing, had no respect of persons, that most poverty-stricken defence of the consciously unworthy, and would speak out before the world; had begun to be doubtful, recollecting but imperfectly

how much he had trusted him, whether he might not have told him more than it was well he should know; and now made up his mind that it was very nearly time to be rid of him. Only it must be done cautiously—managed with the appearance of a thoroughly good understanding, so that neither he nor my lady should suspect!

He set himself to think how best the thing could be effected, but with a procrastination which was more weakness than conscience concluded it would be better to wait a little: he would not have him fancy he had recognized him, and that was the reason! But it would be well to have him out of the house before she was able to see him again! And if in the meantime she should die, all would be well, and there would be no cause for uneasiness as to what might have come to pass! For the earl's distrust once aroused, went farther than that of his son. He did not believe in blue blood to the same degree; knew a few things more than he; thought it quite possible that the daughter of a long descent of lords and ladies should fall in love with a shepherd lad, or even one lower still. *Donal must be got rid of!* he might be *very seriously* in the way! Who could tell what might not have to be done, if the legal owner of the property were to refuse—to persist in refusing her hand to the rightful owner of it! There is no interpreter of right with stronger convictions than selfishness.

Arctura continued slowly to recover. It was some weeks after the accident, and she had not yet left her room, but she had been getting upon the sofa for a good many days, and the doctor was more sanguine

about her final recovery; and now there was a talk of her going into the library. Donal had seen her many times, but the earl had never suspected, with a woman of sense like Mrs. Brooks, who had been so long in the family, and had hitherto managed to keep even him out of her room, there was the smallest danger of such a thing: as we know, the case was more peculiar than the earl was capable of understanding. But the moment he heard the library spoken of he saw that he must delay no longer. Besides he had by this time contrived a very neat little plan.

He sent for Donal. He had been thinking, he said, that he would want a holiday this summer: he had not seen his parents since he came to the castle! He had himself been thinking it very desirable that Davie should see a little of the true world — something of another kind of life from that to which alone as yet he had been accustomed. There was a great danger of boys brought up in his position getting narrow, and careless of the thoughts and feelings of their fellow men! He would take it as a great kindness of Donal, who had always seemed to have a regard to the *real* education of his pupil, would take him with him when he went, and let him see and understand the ways of life among the humbler classes of the nation — so that if ever he came to sit in Parliament, which he hoped he was not absurd, in the case of a boy like Davie, in looking forward to the possibility of, he might know the very heart of the people for whom he would have to legislate.

Donal listened, and agreed as far as he could with the remarks of his lordship. In himself he had not

the least faith now — wondered what sort of a fool the earl thought him, to imagine that after all that had passed between them, he should yet place any confidence in what he said ; but he listened. What the earl really had in his mind he could not even surmise ; but to take Davie with him to his father and mother was a delightful idea. For the boy had been growing fast under his teaching, and had shown a faculty, quite rare in one so young, for looking to the heart of things, and seeing the relation of man to man. But this had indeed come to him through a willing perception of those eternal truths in a still higher relation of persons, which are open only to the childlike nature, whether in boy or man, girl or woman.

It was easy now for his father and mother to take the boy as well as himself into the house as guests, their worldly condition having been and continuing to be so much bettered by the kindness of their friend, Sir Gibbie, — after the homeliest fashion, however, still, and so much the more to be desired for Davie. He would see genuine live simplicity, dignity, and unselfishness — the real embodiment of the things he had without much talking held constantly before him ! There might be some other reason behind the earl's request, he reflected, which it would be well for him to know, but he would sooner discover that by a free consent than by hanging back ; and anything bad it could hardly be ! He shrank from leaving Lady Arctura while she was still so far from well, but she was getting better much faster now, and for a fortnight there had been no necessity for his presence to soothe her while she

slept. Neither did she yet know, so far at least as Donal or Mrs. Brooks were aware, that he had ever been near her in the night.

It was, as things stood between him and Lord Forgue, well on that ground also, he thought, that he should be away for a while: it would give a chance in that foolish soul of things settling themselves down, and common sense assuming the reins where no yet better coachman was at all likely for some time to mount the box! He had of course heard nothing of the strained relations between him and Lady Arctura, or he might have been a little more anxious — from the persecutions to which she might be subjected by a young man who had hitherto shown himself so devoid of consideration as to what ought and ought not to be. For the earl, would not Davie be a kind of pledge? — but of what?

In a vague way he took him as a sort of hostage — in respect of what it would have been hard for him to specify; and he little knew what such a man would sacrifice to gain a cherished end. Even Davie, much, *for him*, as he loved him, he would not have allowed to stand between Forgue and the property.

When Davie heard the proposal, he went wild with joy. Actually to see the mountains, and the sheep, and the colleys, of which Donal had told him such wonderful things! To be out all night perhaps with Donal and the dogs and the stars and the winds! Perhaps it would come on a storm, and he would lie in Donal's plaid under some great rock, and hear the wind roaring around them, but not able to get at them. And the sheep would come and huddle close up to them, and keep them so warm with their woolly sides!

and he would stroke their heads and love them! Davie was no longer a mere child, far from it: but what is loveliest in the child's heart, was yet strong in him. "If he do but continue faithful," thought Donal, "it will grow stronger and stronger." So the prospect of going with Donal was to him a thing to be dreamed about day and night till it came! Nor were the days many before it was definitely settled that they were to go. The earl would have Mr. Grant, he said, treat his pupil precisely as one of his own standing; he might take him on foot if he was inclined!

The proposal was eagerly accepted by both. They packed their wallets, got their boxes ready for the carrier, and one lovely morning late in spring, just as summer was showing her womanly face through the smiles and tears of spring, they set out together.

It was with no small dismay that Arctura heard of the proposal. She said nothing, however, and it was only when Donal came to take his leave of her that she broke down a little. She spoke with great composure at first, and but for her face Donal would not have known she was in the least uneasy. He spoke to the look.

"We shall often wish, Davie and I, that you were with us," he said.

"Why?" was all she could trust herself to rejoin.

"Because we shall often feel very happy, and then we shall wish you had the same happiness," he answered.

Thereat she burst into tears, and then was able to speak.

"Don't think me very silly," she said. "I know God is with me; and as soon as you are gone I will

go to him to comfort me. But I cannot help feeling as if I were being left like a lamb among wolves. I could not give any reason for it: I only *feel* as if some danger were close upon me. Dear Mrs. Brooks, I know I have you with me, and I would trust you with anything. — Indeed, if I hadn't you," she added, laughing through her tears, "I should be ready to run away with Mr. Grant and Davie!"

"If I had known you felt like that," said Donal, "I would not have gone. And yet I do not see how I could have avoided it, being Davie's tutor, and bound to do as his father wishes with regard to him. Still, if I had known, I might have refused to take a holiday yet. Only, dear Lady Arctura, there is no chance in this, or in anything. I need not say I will not forget you. And in three weeks or a month we shall be back."

"That is a long time!" said Arctura, ready to weep again.

Is it necessary to say she was not a weak woman? No; for those for whom the statement might otherwise be necessary, are just those who will not believe it. They do not understand that it is not betrayal of feeling, but avoidance of duty that constitutes weakness. After a brief illness a strong man may be weak as water in their sense. There is not much in what the common people of society think about strength and weakness; it is poor stuff, like the rest of their wisdom — and will one day prove such to themselves, thank God! — which to them will sound like an imprecation. For they will never really thank him themselves until they are spoiled and peeled of all that is false, and learn there is but one thing

worth their care, and but one person their homage.

Arctura speedily recovered her composure and with the gentlest smile bade Donal goodbye. She was in her little room next the state chamber where she now slept; the sun was shining in at the window, which was open, letting the song of a little bird through, clear and sweet.

“You hear him,” said Donal,—“how he trusts in God without knowing it! We are made able to trust him knowing in whom we have believed! Ah, dear Lady Arctura! no heart even yet can tell what things God has in store for them who will just let him have his way with them. Goodbye. Write to me if anything comes to you that you think I can help you in. And be sure I will make haste to you the moment you let me know you want me.”

“Thank you, Mr. Grant; I know you mean every word you say. If I need you, I will not hesitate to send for you—only if you come, it will be as my friend, and not”—

“It will be as your servant, and not as Lord Morven’s,” supplied Donal. “I quite understand. Goodbye. The father of Jesus Christ, who was so sure of him, will take care of you; do not be afraid.”

He turned and went: he could no longer bear the look of her eyes. Out of her sight he had his turn of so-called weakness.

The day was a glorious one, and Davie, full of spirits, could not understand why Donal seemed so unlike himself.

“Poor Arkie would scold you, Mr. Grant!” he said.

He avoided the town, and walked a good distance

round to get into the road beyond it, his head bent as if he were pondering a pain. At moments he felt as if he must return at once, and refuse to leave the castle for any reason. But he could not see that it was the will of God he should do so. A presentiment is not a command. A prophecy may fail of the least indication of duty. Hamlet defying augury is the religious man Shakspeare takes pains to show him. The presentiment may be true, may be from God himself, yet involve no reason why a man should change his way, turn a step aside from the path before him. St. Paul received warning after warning on his way to Jerusalem that bonds and imprisonment awaited him, and these warnings came from the spirit of prophecy, but he would not heed them. He knew better than imagine duty to be determined by consequences; or that foresight is direction: there is a better guide, and he followed that. So did Donal now. Moved to go back, he did not go back — nor afterwards did he repent it.

I am not going to describe the journey. Suffice it to say that, after a few days of easy walking they climbed the last hill, crossed the threshold of Robert Grant's cottage, and were both clasped in the embrace of Janet. For Davie almost rushed into the arms of Donal's mother, and she took him to the same heart to which she had taken wee Sir Gibbie: her bosom was indeed a loveliest refuge.

Then followed delights which more than equalled the expectations of Davie. One of them was finding that, among the best people of the place where he

was best known, Donal was thought as much of as Davie himself could have desired. He could not himself love Donal more than he did, he thought ; but he reaped endless satisfaction in seeing how he was loved by others. Another was an altogether new sense of freedom : he had never had an imagination of such liberty as he now enjoyed. It was as if God were giving it to him fresh out of his sky, his mountains, his winds. But he delighted most in the twilight on the hillside, with the sheep growing dusky around him ; for then Donal would talk about the shepherd of the human sheep ; and Donal talked about him in such a different way from the clergyman ! Hearing Donal, Davie felt not only that there was once, but that there is now that man — a man altogether lovely — the heart of all beauty everywhere — a man who gave himself up that we might know his grand perfect father as he did, for all his delight was in his father and his father's children. Donal showed Davie how the heart of Jesus was, all through, the heart of a son, the son of the one perfect father ; and how, if he hadn't had this perfect son to help him, God could not have made any of us his little sons and daughters, loving Him with all our might, but always far behind the son, who has known him for ever and ever. Davie's heart would glow, and he would feel ready to do everything that son might want him to do ; and Donal hoped, and had good ground for hoping, that when the hour of trial came, he would be able to hold, not merely by the unseen, but by the seemingly unpresent and unfelt, in the name of the eternally true.

And now Donal's youth began to seem far behind

him. All bitterness was gone out of his memories of Lady Galbraith. He yet loved her tenderly, but was pleased she should be Gibbie's. How much of this happy change was owing to his interest in Lady Arctura enabling his mind to recover its own healthy tone, he did not inquire: much as he was interested in Arctura — more in some very important ways than he ever had been in Lady Galbraith, he was too jealous of his own heart, shrank too much from the danger of any folly, knew now so well how small an amount of yielding might serve to unfit him for a time at least for the performance of the duties of life with anything like full manly freshness — amongst which duties would come first due regard to the needs of the very person over whom he must keep watch and ward lest he should himself fail her — that he had often turned his thoughts into another channel than that in which they wanted to run lest they should deepen it too swiftly, and should all at once find they could not of themselves leave it again.

To Lady Galbraith he confided his uneasiness about Lady Arctura — not that he could explain — he could only confess himself infected with her uneasiness, and the rather that he knew even better than she the nature of the relatives with whom she might have to come. He told her that if Mrs. Brooks had not been there, he could not have dared to come away, and leave her with such a dread upon her.

Sir Gibbie listened almost open-mouth to his tale of the discovery of the lost chapel, holding the dust of the dead, and perhaps sometimes their wandering ghosts. They assured him that, if he would only bring Lady Arctura to them, they would take care of

her : had she not better give up the weary property, they said, and come and live with them, and be as free as a lark? But Donal said, that, if God had given her a property and no other calling, he certainly would not have her forsake her post, but wait for him to relieve her. She must administer her own kingdom ere she could have an abundant entrance into his! Only he wished he were near to help her, for now she would be less strong than before : and they allowed he was right.

CHAPTER XXXVIII.

FALSE PLAY.

HE had been at home about ten days, during which not a word had come to Davie or himself from the castle, and he was beginning to grow, not anxious, but hungry for news of Lady Arctura, when from a sound sleep he started suddenly awake one midnight, to find his mother by his bedside: she had roused him with difficulty.

“Laddie,” she said, “I’m thinkin’ ye’re wantit.”

“Whaur am I wantit, mother?” he asked rubbing his eyes, but with anxiety already throbbing at his heart.

“At the castel,” she replied

“Hoo ken ye that?” he asked.

“Maybe ye wadna care to ken; an’ I wad hae ill tellin’ ye,” she answered. “Ye may ca’ ’t by what name ye like, but gien I was you, Donal, I wad be aff afore the day brak, to ken what they’re duin’ wi’ that puir leddy at the muckle place ye hae left. My hert’s that sair about her, I canna rest anither moment till I hae ye awa’ upo’ the ro’d til her!”

By this time Donal was out of bed and hurrying on his clothes. He had the profoundest faith in whatever his mother said. Was this a second sight she had had? He had never been told that she possessed the gift! She might have had a dream, or

some impression so deep that she could not but yield to it! One thing only was plain, there was no time to be lost in asking questions. It was enough to him that his mother said "Go," and that it was for the sake of Lady Arctura that she wanted him to go! How quickest could he go? There were horses at Sir Gibbie's: it would save much time if he took one! Putting a crust of bread in his pocket, he set out running. There was a little moonlight, enough for one who knew every foot of the way, and in half an hour of swift descent he was at the stable door of Glashruach.

By this time he knew all the ways of the place, and finding himself unable to rouse any one, speedily gained an entrance, and opened the door; found Sir Gibbie's favorite mare, and without a moment's hesitation saddled, bridled, led her out and mounted her. His mother had undertaken to go down as soon as it was light, and let them know if he should have found it necessary to rob the stable.

And now that he was safe in the saddle, with four legs under him and time to think, he began to turn over in his mind what he must do. But he soon saw that he could plan nothing until he knew what was the matter, of which he had dreadful forebodings. Was it not possible that a man in the mental and moral condition of the earl would risk anything and everything, unrestrained by law or conscience, to secure the property for his son, and through him for the family? Donal found at least that having once yielded to the suggestion of the possibility, there was no more anywhere for him to stop. The earl might — might poison her, smother her, kill her anyhow.

And then rushed into his mind what the housekeeper had told him about his cruelty to his wife ; a man like that, who was no longer capable of *feeling*, however well he might *know* the difference between right and wrong, who hardly did know the difference between dreaming that he did a thing, and actually doing that thing, could scarcely be considered a safer member of a family than any devil in or out of hell ! He would have blamed himself bitterly for having gone away, had he not been sure that he was not following his own will in the matter ; if there were a better way than he had taken, he did not think that way had been intended for him to go in, else it would have been shown him. But now he would be restrained by no considerations of delicacy towards the earl or any one ; whatever his hand found to do, he would do, regardless of how it might look ! If he could not readily get a word with Lady Arctura, he would at once seek the help of the law, tell what he knew, and get a warrant of search. He dared not think what he dreaded, but he felt he could be sure of nothing without seeing her with his own eyes, and hearing from her own mouth that all was well — only that should not be, else why should his mother have sent him to her ? Doubtless the way to help her would be unfolded to him as he went on. And if everything should seem to go against him, he would yet say with Sir Philip Sidney, that, “since a man is bound no farther to himself than to do wisely, chance is only to trouble them that stand upon chance.” If his plans or attempts, whatever they might be, should all in themselves fail one after the other, yet, he said to himself, “There’s a divinity that shapes our ends,

rough hew them how we will." And so he rode on, taking good care of his horse, lest much haste should make the less speed. But the animal was strong and in good condition, and by the time he had seen the sun rise, climb the heavens, and go half way down their western slope, and had stopped three times to refresh her, he found himself after much climbing and descent, on a good level road that promised by nightfall to bring him to the place of his desire.

But the poor beast was now getting tired, and no wonder, for she had had a hard day's work. Donal dismounted every now and then to relieve her, that he might go the faster when he mounted again, comforting himself that, in the true path, the delays are as important as the speed; for the hour is the point, not the swiftness: an hour too soon may be more disastrous than an hour too late! He would arrive at the right time for him whose ways are not as our ways, because they are so much better! The sun went down and the stars came out, and the long twilight began. But before he had got a mile farther he became suddenly aware that the sky had clouded over, the stars had vanished, and the rain was at hand. The day had been sultry, and the relief had arrived. Lightning flamed out and darkness full of thunder followed. After a few flashes it became evident that the storm was drawing nearer. His horse, though young and high-spirited, was too weary to be greatly frightened; the rain refreshed her, and they made a little more speed. But it was dark night amidst the now grumbling, now raging storm, before they came where, had it been light, Donal would have looked to see the castle.

When he reached the town, he rode into the yard of the Morven Arms, and having there found a sleepy ostler, gave up his horse, he would be better without her at the castle!—and was just setting out to walk to the castle when the landlord appeared—who, happily had by this time learned to pay proper respect to the tutor at the castle.

“We didna luik to see *you*, sir, at this time!” he said.

“Why not?” returned Donal, scenting information.

“We thought ye was awa’ for the simmer, seein’ ye tuik the yoong gentleman wi’ ye, an’ the yerl himsel’ followt!”

“Where is he gone?” asked Donal.

“Oh, dinna ye ken, sir? hae na ye h’ard?”

“Not a word.”

“That’s varra strange, sir! There’s a clearance at the castel. First gaed my Lord Fergie, an’ syne my lord himsel’ an’ my lady, his niece, an’ syne gaed the housekeeper, Mistress Brooks, for her mither was deein’, they said. I’m thinkin’ there maun be a weddin’ to the fore. There was some word o’ fittin’ up the auld hoose i’ the toon here, ’cause Lord Fergie didna care aboot bein’ at the castel ony langer.—It’s strange ye haena h’ard, sir,” he went on, for Donal stood absorbed in awful hearing. “Surely some letter maun hae miscarried!” He felt as if the sure and firm-set earth were giving way under his feet.

“I will run up to the castle, and hear all about it from some of the people,” he said. “Look after my horse, will you?”

“But I’m tellin’ ye, sir, ye’ll fin’ naebody there,” said the man. “They’re a’ gane. To the best o’ my knowledge, there’s no sowl aboot the place — ’cep it may be deif Betty Lobban, wha wadna hear the angel wi’ the last trump. — Mair by token, she’s that feart for robbers that she gangs till her bed the minute it begins to grow dark, and sticks her heid aneith the bed-claes — no that that mak’s her ony deifer!”

“Then you think there is no use in going up?” he said.

“Not the smallest,” answered the innkeeper.

“Get me some supper then. I will take a look at my horse, and be in by and by.

He went and saw that the horse was being ministered to, and then set off for the castle as fast as his legs would carry him. There was foul play somewhere beyond a doubt! — where of what sort he could not tell! but first he must make sure that the man’s report was correct! If it was, he would go straight to the police! The factor had left with his sister for a holiday before he did!

He mounted the hill, and drew near the castle. A terrible gloom fell upon him: there was not a light in the sullen pile! It was gloomy even to terror! He went to the main entrance, and rang the great bell as loud as he could ring it, but there was no answer to the summons, which echoed and yelled horribly, as if the house were actually empty. He rang again, and again came the horrible yelling echo, but no more answer than if it had been a mausoleum. Although he had been told enough to know what to expect, his heart sank within him. Once more he rang and waited; but there was neither sound nor

hearing. Should he go away? The place grew so terrible to him as he stood there, that, had he found the door was wide open, he would almost have hesitated to enter. But something urged him from within: his mother had sent him here! surely she was only the agent of another!—and here was his first chance of learning whither they had gone!—there might be a letter or some message for him! anyhow he knew that he had to go into that house, and at least learn whether it was indeed empty! There was false play! he kept repeating to himself—but what was it? and where was it to be met and defeated? As to getting into the house, there was no difficulty, and he made no delay: he had in his pocket the key to his own stair, which he generally carried; and if he had not had it, he would yet soon have got in, for he knew all the ins and outs of the place better than any one else about it. As it was, however, he had to climb over two walls before he got to the door of the north tower. Happily he had left it locked when he went away, else probably they would have secured it otherwise. He went softly and with a strange feeling of dread, up the stair to his room. He must settle in his mind what he was to do first, or rather what he was to do at all! He would not go roaming about the house at the risk of coming unexpectedly upon the deaf old woman, and terrifying her out of her senses: that would not be the way to get any information out of her! If there were no false play, he went on thinking as he walked wearily up the stair, surely at least Mrs. Brooks would have written to let him know they were going! If only he could learn where *she* was!

He grew more and more weary as he ascended, and when he reached the top, he staggered into his own room, and fell on the bed in the dark.

But he could not rest: the air of the place was stifling! The storm had ceased for a while, but the atmosphere was yet full of thunder, and terribly oppressive. He got up ready to faint, and opened the window. A little breath of air came in, and revived him; then came a little wind, and in it the moan of what they used to call the ghost-music. It woke many reminiscences. There again was the lightning! The thunder broke with a great roar that bellowed among the roofs and chimneys. The storm was to his mind! it would do him good! He went out on the roof, and mechanically took his way towards the stack of chimneys in which was the Æolian harp. At the base he sat down and stared into the darkness. The lightning came, and he saw the sea lie watching like a perfect peace to take up drift souls, and the land bordering it like a waste of dread. Then came the thunder so loud that it not only deafened but seemed to blind him, so that his brain turned into a lump of clay — and then a lull. And in the lull seemed to come a voice calling, calling, from a great distance: was it possible? was he the fool of weariness and excitement, or did he actually hear his own name? What could it be but the voice of Lady Arctura, calling to him from the spirit world! They had killed her, but she had not forgotten him! She was calling to remind him that they would meet by and by in the land of liberty! His heart swelled in his bosom. Came another roar of thunder, and when that ceased, there was the voice again:

“Mr. Grant! Mr. Grant! come; come!” and he thought he heard also, but could not be sure, “You promised!” Alas the voice was from very far away! — But — could it be from the spirit land? Would she bring his promise to bear on him thence, tempting him thither? She would not! And she knew too that he would not go before his hour, if all the spirits on the other side were to call him to them. He remembered having heard and read of voices from far away, while those who called were yet in the body! Once more it came; but this time it was very faint, and he could not tell what it said. A wail of the ghost-music followed close, and that seemed to come from behind him, not from the chimney. Working apparently by contraries it woke in him a thought which surely would have waked sooner but for the state he was in. God in heaven! could she be down there in the chapel? He sprang to his feet. With superhuman energy he gave a spring and caught hold of the edge of the cleft, drew himself up till his mouth was on a level with it, and called aloud, “Lady Arctura!” There came no answer.

“I am stupid as death!” he said to himself, “I have let her call me in vain!”

“I am coming!” he cried, filled with sudden life and joy, dropt on the roof, and sped down the stair to the door that opened on the second floor: he knew the way so well that he needed but a little guidance from his hands, and would not strike a light, to reach Lady Arctura’s forsaken chamber. He hurried to the spot where the wardrobe had stood, and would with one shove have sent it out of his way. *There was nothing there!* His heart sank within him. Was he

in a terrible dream? He had made a mistake! He had trusted too much to his knowledge of the house, and had deceived himself as to where he was! Clearly he was not in the right room! He must at last strike a light, for he had no longer a notion where he was! Happily he was well provided. Alas! alas! he was where he had intended to be! It was her room! there was the wardrobe a yard or so away from its usual position: *but where it had stood there was no recess!* Fresh plaster gave clear sign of where it had been, and that was all! It was no dream, but an awful succession of facts!

He did not lose a moment, contemplating the change. It would have taken him perhaps hours to break through, though the mortar was not yet hard. Instinctively clutching his skene dhu, he darted to the stair. It *must* have been the voice of Arctura he had heard! She was walled up in the chapel! Down the great stair, with the swift strong noiseless foot of the Highlander he sped, to the door of the earl's business-room, through which alone was the closet behind it and the oak door to be reached: it was locked!

There was but one way left! Down to the foot of the stair he shot. Good heavens! if that way also should have been known to the earl! His heart beat so that he could hardly breathe. He crept through the little door underneath the stair, and made a great noise with the pan and brush left lying there, but was now past fear of being heard. The low arch behind, through which he had crept, was not built up! In a moment he was in the cript of the chapel.

There was but one difficulty left; could he get up

into the opening through the wall from the passage above? Or in it, could he, on the steep slope of the same, find purchase for his feet so as to lift the slab he had there replaced? He sprang at the slope, but there was no hold, and as often as he tried he slipped down again immediately. He tried and tried again till he was worn out and almost in despair. She might be dying and he was close to her and could not reach her! He stood still for a moment to think. Then came to his mind the word, "He that believeth shall not make haste;" and he thought within himself — as he could not at that moment have thought, had he not thought of it many a time before — that God cannot well help men when their minds are in such a tumult that they will not hear what he is saying to them. God can easily help the man who will hear him speak: If there be no other better way, he will work a miracle for him. "The fool!" does some foolish reader say! "To be thinking when he should have been doing!" "Take care," I say to him, "or the time will come when you will be able only to kick against the goad of your driver, because you counted it lost time to make a silence in your soul, that you might hear what you ought to do." With the fear that his friend might be at the point of death within a few feet of him, and for want of him, Donal had yet the strength and wisdom to be quiet and to listen!

And as he stood there in the dark, the vision of the place came before him as when first he saw it, when he threw in the lighted envelope, and in the vision was the stone like a gravestone on which it fell and burned. He started at once from his quiescence, dropped on his hands and knees, and

crawled until he found it. Then out came his knife, and he dug away the earth at one end until he could get both hands under it, when he heaved it from the floor, and shifting it along, got it under the opening in the wall.

CHAPTER XXXIX.

THE PLOT.

MORAL madness, cupidity, cruelty, and I am old-fashioned enough to think, immediate demoniacal temptation working in and on a mind that had ceased almost to distinguish between the real and the unreal — and that not merely as every man who bends the energies of an immortal spirit to further the ends and objects of his lower nature, fails so to distinguish. But as one unable, during considerable portions of his life, to tell whether things took place outside or inside him, content to argue that what equally affected him had an equal right to be regarded as actually existent, and forgetting that there yet remained the fact that the existences were at least of different natures, having different laws and involving different demands upon the two consciousnesses — had culminated in a hideous plot, in which it would be hard to say whether folly crime, or cunning predominated, and the earl had made up his mind that, if the daughter of his brother should continue to refuse to carry out what he asserted and probably believed to have been the wish of her father, and marry her cousin, she should, provided there were another world to go to, go there before him, and leave her property to the son in whom he had resolved to make up to his mother for the wrong

he had done her ; while, if there were no other world, in which to be consoled for the loss of this, there were yet the words of Hamlet to quote — “ Since no man has ought of what he leaves, what is't to leave betimes ? ” — in other words, she would be no worse than she would of necessity have been, when the few years of her natural earthly pilgrimage were over ; and the difference to her was not worth thinking of beside the greatness of the stake to him. But at the same time he hoped a little fright would serve, and she would consent to marry Forgue to escape the fate she should soon see hanging over her ! — in prospect of which probability he took care that Forgue should not bear a blame fit to render it all but impossible she should afterwards learn to love him, sending him out of the way to London. The moment Donal was gone, he began, therefore, to make himself pleasing, as he had well known how in his youth ; and soon had reason to be satisfied that interest could yet rouse something in him of the old gift of pleasing ; with the advantage of the loving prejudice of a dutiful niece, it was not difficult for him to overcome, or at least to hold at abeyance the distrust of him which had for some time been growing rather than diminishing in her mind, and he prevailed upon her, and that without much entreaty, to consent to accompany him to London — merely for a month or so, he said, while Davie was gone ! He would take her here and take her there, and introduce her to the best society in the capital. She did not expect much from his so undertaking ; but the prospect of again seeing London, where she had not been since she was a little girl with her father, had its attractions for

her imagination, and she consented — not however without writing to Donal to communicate the fact: the letter, it is hardly needful to ask *how*, never reached him.

The earl arranged, in order, as he said, to show his recognition of her sweet compliance, that they should post it all the way: nobody nowadays, he said, ever saw anything of his own country! She should! for he would take her by the road he used to travel himself when he was a young man, and railways were in their infancy: she should judge for herself whether we had not lost much of far more value than anything gained by mere rapidity — which indeed only made life itself seem so much the shorter! He sent Simmons before him: and contrived that almost as soon as he himself was gone, Mrs. Brooks should receive a letter from the clergyman of the parish in a remote part of Caithness where her mother, now a very old woman lived, saying that she was at the point of death, and could not die in peace until she had seen her daughter. The whole thing was the work of a madman — excellently contrived for the use of the immediate object, but having no outlook into the dangers of the future. Mrs. Brooks had at once obeyed and gone. He knew that she would leave some one in the house, but he knew also who that was likely to be — namely old deaf Betty Lobban: this was an advantage for his plot.

After the first night on the road, he turned across country, and a little towards home; after the next night, he drove back. As it was by a different road, Arctura suspected nothing. When they had got within a few hours of the castle, they stopped at a

little inn for tea, and there he contrived to give her a dose of one of those drugs he had with him. At the next place he represented her as his daughter with whom, because of a sudden illness he was anxious to reach home, however late. He gave an imaginary name to the place, and kept on the last post-boy, who knew nothing of the country. He knowing it well from old time, gave directions that completely bewildered him, and set them down at their own castle-door supposing it to be an altogether different place and in a different part of the country : it was a kind of thing quite after the earl's own heart, for he delighted in making a fool of a fellow-mortal. Last of all, he sent him away so as altogether to avoid the town, where alone, so far as the outlook of the earl went, it was of importance that nothing should transpire of his return.

How he could effect what followed, I hardly know ; but he had the remains of great strength, and when under certain influences, which he knew how to manage, was for the time almost as strong as he had ever been ; he contrived to get her up to his room on the stair, and through the oak-door.

He had previously made preparations in the chapel with his own hands only. All was in beautiful readiness ; while the prospect of what he was going to do and witness, woke no unpleasing recollection of former cruel delights and made him for the moment feel almost young again. So far he had carried out the programme he had drawn up !

CHAPTER XL.

WAKING TO THE FACT.

WHEN Arctura woke from her unnatural sleep, she did not at first even trouble herself to think where she was. But as she came to herself, she tried of course to *localize* herself. The last place she could recall was the little inn where they had their tea: she must have been taken ill, she thought, and was now in a room of the same. It was quite dark, and she wished they had left a light by her. She seemed to lie comfortably enough; but she had a suspicion that it was but a very poor place, not over clean, and was glad to find that she lay in her clothes. Thus thinking she turned on her side: something pulled her — something on her wrist. She did not remember that she had been wearing a bracelet, but she must have one on, and it had got entangled in the coverlet somehow. She tried to unclasp it, but could find no way, neither from the shape of the thing could remember which of her bracelets it was. And there was something attached to it! It felt like a chain — a thick chain! It was very odd! What could it mean? She did not yet trouble herself, however, but lay quietly coming to fuller consciousness. Then she became aware of what had been pressing on her unready recognition — namely, a strange air, rather than odor, in the room. It was by no means

definite : yet she thought she had smelt it before, and not very long ago. Suddenly it flashed upon her that it was the smell of the lost chapel ! But that was at home in the castle, and she had left that two days before ! She would have started up ! The dews of agonized horror were rolling down her face ! She was pulled hard by the wrist ! She cried on God. She was lying where that heap of dust had lain ! She was manacled with the same chain in which that woman had died hundreds of years ago ! For one moment her being so recoiled from the horror that she seemed on the edge of madness. But surely madness, if it be any, is not the sole refuge of humanity from terror ! When torture grows too great, the sensorium finds refuge in insensibility : it refuses to bear more : something analagous lies I think within the mental sphere. But there is indeed another and better refuge ! In proportion as he is admitted and dwells in the human soul, God is the present help. In the time of trouble with him in the house we not only need fear nothing, but that is there which in its own being and nature casts out fear. Such a sense of absolute helplessness came upon Arctura that she felt awake in her endless claim upon the protection of her original, the source of her being. And what sooner would God have of his children than their preferring of such claim ! He is always calling them his children, and when they call to him as their father, then and not till then is he satisfied. And with that sense awaked in her there fell upon her a kind of sleep, which yet was not sleep, but a repose such as might be the sleep of a spirit.

By degrees it departed, and her senses grew more and more awake. She recalled her feelings when first she came down into the place, and pictured to herself exactly what the darkness was hiding from her. The tide of terror began again to rise, and soon threatened to become altogether monstrous. She reasoned with herself that she had been safely brought through its first and most dangerous inroad, but reason could not outface terror. Then first she knew that there can be no refuge from fear in going mad, for some madness is just the prevailing presence of it. She was not then able to go a little farther, and reflect, that there is one who must temper even their terrors to the insane. If the night hideth not from him, surely neither does the moral night, nor the darkness of fear!

It began to thunder, first with a low distant muttering roll, then with a loud and near bellowing. Some people are strangely terrified at thunder, but Arctura had never been: she had the child's feeling that it was God that thundered; and now it comforted her as with the assurance that God was near. And as she lay and listened to the great organ of the heavens, to her spirit it seemed to grow articulate; God seemed calling to her and saying, "Here I am, my child! do not be afraid." Then she reasoned with herself that the worst that could happen to her was to lie there till she died of hunger, and that could not be so very bad! Then mingled with the thunder came a wail of the ghost-music. She started with a strange feeling that she had heard it a hundred times while lying there in the dark alone, and only now for the first time was waking up to the fact. She was

herself the lady they had shut up there to die, and she had lain there for ages, every now and then hearing that sound of the angels singing! Her brain was beginning to wander. She reasoned with herself, and dismissed the fancy, but it came and came again, mingled with the memories of the times she had spent on the roof with Donal.

By and by she fell asleep, and woke in a terror which seemed to have been growing in her sleep. She sat up, and stared before her into the dark. From the place where stood the altar there seemed to rise and approach her a form of deeper darkness. She heard nothing, saw nothing, yet seemed to know that something was near. It came nearer and nearer. It was but a fancy, and she knew it; but the fancy still assumed to be; and the moment she gave way, and acknowledged it real, would immediately assume the reality it had been waiting for, and clasp her in the gulf of its skeleton-arms. She cried aloud. It came nearer still; but the instant it was about to seize her came a sudden change: her fear was gone and in its place a sense of absolute safety; there was nothing in all the universe to be afraid of! It was a night of June, and roses, roses, everywhere! What was it? Had God sent her mother to think her full of roses? Why her mother, when God himself is the heart of every rose that ever bloomed? She would have sung aloud for joy, but no voice came from her; she could not utter a sound. Then came the thought of Donal surging into her heart! If she were to die down here, then one day he would come and find her! But therewith came a terrible picture: no! no! She would go to him in his sleep, and beg him not to go

near the place ! Then came Donal's voice strangely mingled with music and thunder — a voice from far away, and she did not know whether it *was* her fancy or she really heard him ; but it filled her so with delight that she tried to answer him, but her voice died away in her throat.

CHAPTER XLI.

DELIVERANCE.

PRESSING with all his might against the sides of the sloping window-sill, if window that opening into the crypt could be called, Donal did at last push up the slab so far as to get a hold with one hand on the next to it, and so save himself from slipping down again, as up to that moment he had been constantly doing. But the weight of it was now resting on his fingers. He kept still for a few minutes to gather strength ; then slowly turned himself on his side, and gradually got the other hand also through the crack. Then hauling himself up with all his force, careless of what might happen to his head, with the top of it he raised the stone so as to get head and neck through. And now if it did not strangle him before he got farther, the thing was done ! He gave one more Herculean lift of his body — for he had at once to lift his own weight and that of the stone — and like a man rising from the dead rose from the crypt into the passage.

But the door of the chapel was closed.

“My lady,” he cried, “don’t be afraid. I am going to drive the door open. You must not mind the noise ! It is only Donal Grant !”

“Only Donal Grant !” She heard the words ! They woke her from her swoon of joy. — “Only Donal Grant !” What less of an *only* could there be

in the world for her! Was he not the messenger of him who raises the dead! "Only Donal Grant!"

She tried to speak, but not a word would come, and Donal, fearing lest, after all, he had arrived too late, drew back a pace, and sent such a shoulder against the door that it flew to the wall, and fell with a great crash on the floor. The same moment Donal was in the chapel.

"Where are you, my lady?" he said, but still she could not speak.

He began feeling about.

"She can never be on the terrible bed!" he murmured to himself.

She heard him, and fear lest he should turn away, and think she was not there after all, gave her voice.

"I don't mind it now you are there!" she said.

"Thank God," he cried, "I have found you at last!" and then, worn out, he sank on his knees, with his head on the bed, and fell a sobbing like a little child.

She put out her hand through the darkness to lay it on his head, but she could not reach him. He heard the rattle of the chain and understood.

"Chained too, my dove!" he said, involuntarily, but in Gaelic. But he wept no more; again he thanked God, and took courage. New life seemed to rush through every vein, and he rose to his feet conscious of strength like a giant.

"Can you strike a light, Donal, and let me see you?" said Lady Arctura. It was the first time she had said his name to himself: it had been often on her lips that night.

He did as she requested, and for a moment they

looked at each other. She was not so changed as he had feared to find her. Terrible as had been her trial, it had not lasted very long, and had been succeeded by a heavenly joy. She was paler than usual, yet there was a rosy flush over her beautiful face; her arm was stretched towards him, and clasped by the rusty ring, just as they had together imagined the arm of the dead lady before time had turned it to dust, had tightened the chain that held it to the bed-post. She was in her travelling dress, just as her uncle had brought her back.

“How pale and tired you look,” she said.

“I am a little tired,” he answered. “I have come straight from home. My mother sent me to you. She said I must come, but she did not tell me why I was to come.”

“It was God sent you, Donal,” she returned — and then she told him what she knew of her story.

“But,” said Donal, “how could the villain have got the ring on your wrist?”

He looked closer, and saw that her hand was swollen, and the skin abraded.

“He has forced it on!” he said. “How it must hurt you!”

“It does hurt!” she replied; “but I did not notice it before. It was such a little thing beside the misery of finding myself alone in the place whose horrors had so often haunted me.”

Donal took the little hand in his. It was much swollen. But where the ring was now on the wrist it lay loose.

“Do you suppose he meant to leave me here to die?” said Arctura.

“It is impossible to tell,” returned Donal. “It is hard to believe anything so bad even of one who could do as he has done. But in truth I suspect we have had to do with more of a madman than any one knew. I wonder if a soul can be mad. The devil, I suppose, must be mad with self-worship! We must leave nothing in his power any more. I will strike another light, and see whether there is anything about the place to show whether he had plotted this, or it was a sudden idea that came to him.”

He did so. The bed had been smoothed a little apparently, and a travelling rug spread over the dust : that was all the preparation made. Whether it had been done beforehand, or only when he brought her in could not be determined. There was no other change they could see in the place. Whether he meant her to lie there as she was to die, or only to frighten her into compliance with his wishes, neither of them could tell. Donal told her then how it was that he had come.

“Now will you take me away?” she said.

“I must first get rid of the chain,” answered Donal. “That may be a little difficult; but it is only a matter of patience.”

“You will not leave me?”

“Only to get what tools I may want.”

“But after that?” she said.

“Not until you wish me,” he answered.

There came a great burst of thunder. It was the last of the storm, and when it had bellowed and shuddered, and gone and come rolling up again, then at last died away in the great distance with a low continuous rumbling, as if it would never cease, then

the silence that followed was like the Egyptian darkness, that might be felt.

Out of the tense heart of the silence came a slow step, seemingly far off, but approaching.

“It is the earl!” said Arctura.

“He will find the door open!” said Donal, and darted to set it up.

“Never mind,” said Arctura. “His imagination will account for it at once. It does for everything where he has no suspicion. He will think it was the thunder!—I wonder if he has a light!” she added hurriedly. “If he has you must get behind the altar.” The step came nearer. Evidently he was coming through the dark, and had no light.

“Do not speak a word,” said Donal; “let him think you are asleep. I will stand so that if he come near the bed he shall come against me. He shall not touch you!”

“Arctura!” said a deep, awful voice. It was that of the earl. She made no answer.

“Dead of fright, I daresay!” muttered the voice. “I will strike a light and see. I hope she will not prove as obstinate as her mother—I mean her aunt!” Donal stood intently watching for the light. After some fumbling, came a sputter and a gleam, but the match failed. Donal marked the spot and the distance, and ere he could try another, made a swift blow as near as he could judge through the space. It struck his arm, and knocked the box from his hand.

“Ha!” he cried, and there was terror in the cry, “she strikes me through the dark!”

Donal prepared for a struggle, but kept very still.

He must run no shadow of a risk that could be avoided so long as Arctura was not out of his power. She was not yet even free from the chain! Arctura kept as still as he. But the earl turned and went away.

“I will bring a light!” he muttered. The moment Donal heard the door close above, he said to Arctura :

“Now, my lady, you heard him say he would bring a light; I dare not leave you alone with him, and somehow I think it better I should not encounter him yet; do you mind being left a few minutes while I fetch some tools to set you free?”

“No, certainly,” she answered: “God sent you.”

“I will be back before him,” he answered.

“Be careful you do not meet him,” said Arctura.

There was no difficulty in Donal’s way now that the slab was raised, either in going or returning. He sped, and in a time that seemed short even to the prisoner, he was back. There was no time to file through ring or chain. He attacked the staple in the bed-post, and drew it. Then he wound the chain round her arm, and tied it there.

He had by this time made up his mind what it would be best to do with her. He had been at first inclined to carry her out of the house altogether: the factor and his sister were away, but there was Andrew Comin’s Doory! It would, however, be yielding their enemy an advantage to leave him in possession of the house, he thought. Awkward things might result from it, and tongues of inventive ignorance and stupidity would wag wildly! He would take her to her own room, and there watch her as he would

a child, nor leave a chance for any one to come near her.

“There! you are free, my lady,” he said; “now come.”

He took her hands, and she raised herself wearily.

“The air is so stifling!” she said.

“We shall soon be in better,” answered Donal.

“Shall we go out on the roof?” she said, like one talking in her sleep.

“I will take you to your own room,” said Donal. “— But I will not leave you,” he added quickly, seeing a look of anxiety cloud her face, — “at least so long as your uncle is in the house. I do wonder what he has done with Mistress Brooks.”

“Take me where you will,” said Arctura.

There was no way for them to get out but through the crypt. Donal got down first, and she followed without hesitation. Then there was only the little closet under the stair to creep through, and they were in the hall of the castle.

As they went up the stair, Donal had an idea.

“He can’t have got back yet!” he said: “we will take away the key from the oak-door; he will only think he has taken and mislaid it; and not discover so soon that you are gone. I wonder what he will do when he does not find it! Will he leave you to die there, or get help to get you out?”

He did as he said, locked the oak-door, and brought away the key. They then went together to the room she had last occupied on the first floor. The door was a little ajar, and there was a light in it. They went softly up, and peeped in. There was the earl turning over the contents of Arctura’s writing desk.

“He will find nothing,” she said, “either to serve him or hurt me!”

“We will go to your old room,” said Donal. “You will not mind it now, I know. The recess itself is built up with bricks and mortar; he cannot come near you that way!”

As soon as they reached the two rooms, Donal saw to all the doors, then lighted a fire, and left her while he went to look for something to eat, having first agreed upon a certain knock, without which she was to open to no one.

While she was yet changing the garments in which she had lain on the terrible bed, she heard the earl pass and the door of his room close. Apparently he had made up his mind to let her spend the night without another visit, for he had himself received a terrible fright in the place. A little longer and she heard Donal’s gentle signal at her door. He had brought some biscuits and a little wine in the bottom of a decanter from the housekeeper’s room; there was literally nothing in the larder, he said.

They sat down and ate together. Donal told her his adventures, and she told him hers, so far as she knew them — also about Forgue’s suit and her refusal to listen to him, as perhaps explaining the earl’s design. They agreed that the first thing to be done was to write to the factor to come home at once, and bring his sister with him. Then Donal set to with his file to free her from her bracelet. It was not an easy job. There was the constant danger of hurting her, especially as her hand was so swollen; and besides the rust filled and blunted his file; it took a long time.

“There!” he said at last. “And now, my lady, you must take some rest. Lock both your doors. I will sleep here; this sofa will do well! Ah, the key of this door is gone! So much the better. I will draw the sofa across it, so that even if he should come wandering here in the night, he may find a small obstruction.”

In the night Donal heard the earl’s door open, and followed him. He went to the oak-door, and tried in vain to open it.

“She has taken it!” Donal heard him say in a trembling voice.

All the night long he roamed the house a spirit grievously tormented; then in the gray of the morning, having probably almost persuaded himself that the whole affair was but a trick of his imagination, went back to his room and to bed, taking yet an extra dose of his medicine as he lay down.

In the morning Donal left the house, having first had a word with Arctura through the door, and hastening to the inn, paid his bill, bought some things for their breakfast, and mounting his horse, rode up to the castle, and rang the bell—then, no notice being taken, went and put up his horse, and let himself into the house, where he began to sing, and so singing came up the stair, and along the corridor where the earl lay.

This waked him, and brought him to the door in a rage. But the moment he saw Donal his countenance fell; his usual coolness seemed to give way.

“What the devil are you doing here?” he said.

“They told me in the town that you were in England, my lord!—Please tell me where is my lady.”

"I wrote to you," said the earl, "that we were gone to London, and that you need be in no haste to return. I trust you have not brought Davie with you."

"I have not, my lord."

"Then pray make what haste back to him you can. I cannot have him left alone with bumpkins! But you may stay there with him as long as you find it convenient—till I send for you. He can study there as well as here! I will pay what board you think proper—for both of you. Now go. I am home but for a few hours on business, and off again by the afternoon coach!"

"I do not go, my lord, until I have seen my mistress."

"Your mistress! Who, pray, is your mistress? I thought I was your master, if it comes to that."

"I am no longer in your service, my lord. If there is any penalty for lack of due warning, I am ready to render good reason."

"Then what in the name of God, have you done with my son?"

"In good time, my lord, when you have told me where my mistress is! I returned to this house as lady Arctura's servant, not your lordship's; and I desire to know where I shall find her."

"Go to London then."

"What address, please—that I may write to her and receive her orders here?"

"You leave this house instantly," said the earl, unable, however, to conceal some anxiety, if not dread; "I will not have you here in my absence—and her ladyship's too!"

“ My lord, I am not ignorant of how things stand with regard to the house; it belongs to my mistress, and from her alone I will receive orders. Here I remain till I have her command to go.”

“ Very well, then ! By all means remain.”

“ I ask you again for her address, my lord.”

“ Find it for yourself. Because you will not obey my orders am I therefore to obey yours ? ”

His lordship turned on his heel, and flung to his door :

“ It will be my turn presently,” he muttered.

Donal went to Lady Arctura, told her what he had done, and produced his provisions. Together they prepared their breakfast. By and by the earl came from his room, and they partly heard, partly saw him go here and there all over the house, and then turn again to his own apartment. He seemed neither to have eaten or drunk all the time he was in the castle.

About an hour before the starting of the afternoon coach, they saw him leave the house ill able, apparently, to crawl along. He went down the hill towards the town, nor once looked back. They turned and looked at each other. A profound pity for the wretched old man was the feeling at that moment I believe in the minds of each. Then followed one of intense relief and liberty, and then a third found shape as thus —

“ Perhaps you would like to get rid of me now, my lady,” said Donal ; “ but I don’t see how I well can leave you. I should be miserable to think of you here in the house by yourself ; would you have me go and fetch Miss Carmichael ? ”

“No, certainly,” answered Arctura. “I cannot, after what has passed, apply to her the moment I am in trouble.”

“I am glad you think so; it would be to lose the advantage of your uncle not knowing what has become of you.”

“I should certainly like to see what he will do next. Just think, Mr. Grant, if I were to die now, the property would pass into the hands of my uncle, and then into those of Forgue!”

“You can make a will, as your father did,” answered Donal.

Arctura stood thoughtful for a moment.

“I am so ashamed of myself, Mr. Grant!” she said: “If Forgue had sooner sought me, when I did not know anything against him, and when life was so terribly dreary, I cannot say what I might not have been persuaded to! But tell me, is he such a bad man as I have sometimes feared? You don’t think he has any knowledge of this design of his father?”

“I cannot think. I will not believe he would have allowed you to die in the chapel, which I suppose his father must now intend — but — but — I should like to know what has become of poor Eppie!”

It was not long before he learned.

CHAPTER XLII.

ODD CHANGES.

THAT same afternoon, to the great delight of both, Mrs. Brooks returned half wild. From the moment when she discovered herself fooled she had been dreading all manner of terrible things, yet none so terrible as her mistress had to tell her. There seemed likely to be no end to her objurgations, exclamations, anathemas, and explanations, when at length she held lady Arctura safe in her arms.

“Now I can leave you in peace, my lady,” said Donal.

“Noo ye can bide whaur ye are an’ be thankful!” said Mrs. Brooks. “Wha daur meddle wi’ me! But wha kens what the mad yerl, for mad Is’ uphaud him to be — wha kens what he may see fit to do neist! Deed, maister Grant, I cannot lat ye oot o’ the hoose.”

“I was only thinking of going down to Mistress Comin’s,” said Donal.

“Weel, ye can gang; but min’ ye’re hame i’ gude time!”

“I will do exactly as my lady pleases.”

“Then come,” said Arctura.

Donal went, and the first person he saw when he entered the house was Eppie. She turned instantly away, and left the room: he could not help seeing why.

Presently the old woman came, and welcomed him with her usual cordiality, but not her usual cheerfulness: since her husband's death, he had scarcely noted any change on her manner till now; she looked weary of the world.

She sat down, smoothed her apron on her knees, gave him one glance in the face, then looked down at her hands, and had nothing to say.

"I doobt sair I ken what ails ye, Doory," said Donal; "but in the name o' him that's awa', hearken til me.—The lass is no lost, naither is the Lord asleep. Yer lamb is sair misguidit, an' she's sair pluckit o' her bonny woo', but gien she haud the closer by the lave o' the Lord's flock, she'll ken it wasna for want of his care or mercy that this happent till her. It's a terrible pity for the bonny crater, disgracin' them at aucht her. They winna believe them 'at speyks true: an' they wull believe them that lees til them! Still, it's no as gien she had been stealin'! She's wrangt her puir sel', an' ane mair, but it canna gar *me* luik doon upon her as I canna help duin' at the man that's grown rich at the cost o' his neebours. There's mony a gran' prood lass that 'll hae to stan' ahint Eppie yet whan we're a' 'afore the richteous judge."

"Eh, but ye speyk like my Anerew!" cried the poor woman, wiping her old eyes with her apron. "I s' do what I can for her; but there's no hidin' o' 't!"

"Hidin' o' 't!" cried Donal. "The Lord forbid! sic things are no to be hidden. Sae lang's she gangs about in the face o' the warl', the thing oucht to be kenned o' a' that come near her. She maun beir her

burden, puir lass ! The Lord 'll do as he likes about it — only he'll hae naething hidden an' smugglet up ! That's no the w'y o' his kingdom ! — I suppose there's nae doobt wha's the father ?”

“Nane. The lord forbid that should be possible ! It's jist the yoong lord !”

Two days after, Mr. Graeme, the factor, and his sister returned, and at Lady Arctura's request, took, for a time, their abode at the castle. Then came a solemn conference, in which, however anxious she was to say nothing against her uncle, Lady Arctura told both that of late she had become convinced that her uncle was no longer capable of attending to her affairs ; that they had had a difference and he was gone for the present. She desired of them as a personal favor that they would not allude to her being at the castle ; she had gone away with her uncle and was supposed to be with him, but had returned, and her uncle did not know that she was at home : she did not wish him to know. She desired for the present to remain hidden. Mr. Graeme would in the meantime prepare for a thorough understanding of matters as between her and her uncle.

In the course of the investigations that thereupon followed, it became clear that a good deal of the moneys of the estate received by his lordship were in no way by them to be accounted for ; and then Lady Arctura directed that further proceedings should be stayed until the earl should be present to explain, but that no more money was to be handed over to him : her name, however, must not be mentioned.

For some time Mr. Graeme heard nothing of him : but by and by came directions as to where and how

money was to be forwarded. Forgue wrote, but his father signed. Mr. Graeme replied, excusing himself as he could, but sent nothing. They wrote again. Again he excused himself. The earl threatened. Mr. Graeme took no heed. Months passed thus, but neither of the two appeared to enforce their demands. Forgue could not without his father; and his father had reasons for staying away. At length the factor wrote that he would pay no money but to Lady Arctura herself. The earl wrote himself in reply, asking if he had been asleep all this time that he did not know she had died in London and been six weeks in her grave. Again the factor did not reply.

All this time life was going on very quietly in the castle. Davie had long been home, lessons were to the hour as before, and Lady Arctura took a full share in them, only Donal was a little anxious at some signs in her which he could not help taking for those of failing health.

All about the castle was bustling labor — masons and carpenters busy from morning to night. For the very next day after Mr. Graeme's return, Lady Arctura began at once to admit the light of day upon the secret of centuries. The wall that masked the chapel-windows was pulled down; the windows, which had in them hardly a crack, were thoroughly cleaned; the passage under them, which had once been a sort of arcade, was opened to the great stair, where Donal had seen the ends of the steps coming through. The way was cleared to the oak-door by taking away the masking press; and after Lady Arctura had had a small, sweet-toned organ built in the little gallery, she had the stair from her own room opened again, and

fitted with a door, that she might go down when she pleased, as she did often, to play on the organ — above which still, at times, in winds from southeast, the Æolian harp dreamed out the music of the spheres.

The terrible bed had been of course removed. In taking it to pieces for the purpose the joints crumbled to dust, and it could not be put together again. So the carved tester and posts were put up over the great chimney-piece in the hall, and the rest of it was burned; but the story of its finding was written by Donal, and placed among the records of the family.

The alterations that naturally took place in restoring the chapel to the castle admitted much more light and air into the pile, adding beauty and healthfulness, and, without destroying anything valuable in the antiquity of the building, rendered it a much better place to live in. Davie said it was like the conversion of St. Paul! He was an odd boy, but odd in a very right way: things took such decided shapes in his mind, almost everything seen looking to him directly like something unseen, that Donal felt there was that in the boy that called for all the help he could give to develop it. Please God he should not leave him till he had to go.

But it soon became evident to others as well as Donal that the things Lady Arctura had to pass through, had exercised a very hurtful influence on her health. For some time she seemed to be pining, but nothing was plainly amiss with her. She seemed always happy, but her strength at times would suddenly desert her, and she would sink with a little laugh on the nearest support. No one however feared anything very nigh or very definite.

Her organ, to which she had given more labor than she was quite fit for, was now, next to the society of Donal, and the slow reading of her Greek Testament, her greatest delight. Often were its chords to be heard creeping through the long ducts and passages of the castle ; either for a small instrument its tone was peculiarly penetrating, or the lost room was indeed as it ought to be, the very centre of the system of the old house, and the sound of prayer and praise permeated thence in a measure to its most distant parts. On the roof by the chimney stack, Donal would often sit listening to the sounds that rose through the shaft, set free by her worshipping fingers ; and the tears would rise as he thought how her spirit was following her own sweet sounds, in yet sweeter search after her native country.

One day as she sat at her organ, she went on playing and playing till she forgot everything but her music, and all but unconsciously began to sing, "The Lord is mindful of his own." She did not know that she had two listeners — one on the roof above, and one in the chapel below.

When twelve months had come and gone, the earl one day stood before the castle, half and half doubting whether it was his own ; he wanted to come to a proper understanding with his factor, and to see Davie, whom, hearing Donal had resumed his relation with him ; he had willingly left in his care. He had driven up to the point where the road turned off to the stables, and thence walked. The great door was standing open : he walked in and walked up.

What odd change was this on the stair — a door that had not been there before ; at least he had never

seen it! Who could have dared make such a change in his house? The thing was bewildering, but he was accustomed to be bewildered!

He opened the door — a new handsome one of oak, and entered an arcade with arches to the open air: he might have seen it as he approached the house, but he had not looked up. At the end of it was the door of the chapel! He started back in dismay: — the lost chapel, with all its horrible secrets wide open to the eye of day! He went in. It was clear and clean! — no hideous bed! no darkness! no dust! and the air trembling with the delight of the organ-breath, which went rushing and rippling through it in all directions, setting it in the sweetest turmoil. He said to himself he had never had just such a peculiar experience. He had often doubted whether things were or were not the projections of his own brain; knew that sometimes he could not tell; but never before had he had the real appearance, and the unreal of fact brought so immediately and face to face with each other. Everything was just as clear to his eyes as if he were in the prime of youth and health, and yet he was positively, absolutely certain there could be no reality in what he so indubitably saw. At the same time he was by no means certain that the things which seemed last in his experience to have taken place there, had really taken place at all. He had managed to get in doubt about this the moment he failed to find the key. When he would ask himself what had become of his niece, he would to himself reply, that doubtless she was all right: she did not want to marry Forgue, the rascal — and quite right, too, if she had known him as he did! —

and so had slipped out of the way somewhere : she had never cared about the property, if only she had her own way ! That was all women did care about so far as he knew ! That was why his factor had taken such liberties with him ? He had a claim on the property so long as he was the guardian of the lady, and the next heir to it. She had come of age, it was true, but he had not rendered his accounts or yielded his stewardship. If she had died anywhere, the property was his ! She never could have had the heart to leave it away from him ! She had always been very friendly with him, and he had loved her like his own flesh and blood !

But at other times he did not doubt that he had starved her to death in the chapel and was tormented as with all the furies of hell. In his night-visions he would see her lie wasting, hear her moaning, and crying in vain for help : the hardest heart is yet at the mercy of a roused imagination. He would see her body in the various stages of decay as the weeks passed : when would the process be over, that he might go back to the place, and pretending to have just found the lost room, carry away the bodies together, and have them honorably buried ! Should he pretend that it had lain there for centuries, like the others, or insist that it must be she who had so unaccountably disappeared : she had got shut up there, like the bride in the chest, and had not been able to get out again ! If he could but find an old spring lock to put on the door ! But people were so plaguy sharp nowadays ! They found out everything ! — and he positively could not afford to have *everything* found out ! No ; God himself, if

there were such an indefinite entity anywhere, must not be allowed to know everything!

He stood staring. And as he stood and stared, a change began to grow in him; perhaps, after all, what he saw, might *be*. Then the whole thing it had displaced must have been a fancy—a something he had seen only in his dreams and visions! God in heaven! if it could but be proven that he had never done anything such as he had thought belonged to this place—then all the other wicked things he was guilty of—or of which he had at least always supposed himself guilty, and which had been so heavy upon him all his life that it never seemed of the smallest use to try to repent of them, might be forgiven him! But then awoke the old wicked Satan in him, and said:—What difference would that make to the fact that he had done them? He could never take his place as a gentleman in heaven after what had passed! Why did God make such a fuss about a sin or two that a man felt it was of no use to be sorry for them, and went and did worse out of pure despair!

But then, if he had never murdered anybody! After all there might be a God then, and he might if he tried be able to thank him!—But for what? That he was not going to be damned for the thing he had never done? A thing he had only had the unspeakable misfortune to dream he had done? And God never to have interfered to prevent him from having the horrible fancy that he had done it! What was the good of having a God that would not do that much for you, but left his creatures to make the most horrible fools of themselves, and only laughed at them!—

Bah! There was life in the old dog yet! If only he could *know* that he had fancied the whole thing!

The music ceased, and the silence was a shock to him, and again he began to stare about him. He looked up, and there in the gallery, but seeming to his misty sight in the dim chapel to come out of the wall, the pale face of the girl he did not know whether he had or had not murdered. He took her for one of his visions. For, while in conference with any one he showed himself perfectly capable, he was now constantly subject not only to illusions, but to bewildering complications of the real with the things it suggested, which, if they did not appear quite as actual in themselves, brought about at least a common tone by reducing the force of the real; so that the man moved and acted for the time in a world of subdued fact and enhanced fiction. But while she appeared as a vision, there was not therefore any more unreality to him in the appearance than in any other appearance. She came at the least from the world of his imagination, to him, alas! now the reallest of all — to the degree that sometimes, in his moods of believing in a world beyond this, it was that into which he would certainly step the moment he left the body. She looked sweetly at him! She had come to forgive his sins! for Arctura, who had never thought with bitterness of her uncle's cruelty, had always thought of him pitifully, had often longed for the opportunity of letting him know that she had him in her heart still. Therefore looking down, and seeing him there, she regarded him with an expression which told on the good still left in his nature. Was it then true? Was

there no sin of murder on his soul? Had he waked from a horrid dream and was she there to assure him that he might yet look with hope to the world to come? He stretched out his arms towards her. She turned away, and he thought she had vanished. But it was only to fly down the stair. The next moment she was in the chapel, and had taken the old man in her arms. He had not heard her, and was still gazing at the spot she had left. The contact of the material so startled him, causing such a revulsion, that he uttered a loud cry, shoved her from him, and stood looking at her in worse perplexity than ever. Knowledge and fact seemed face to face opposed to each other. The impossible thing was the actual! The awful thing he had done, yet had not done it! Not merely the impossible, the absolutely contradictory in both its members was before him! He stood as one bound to know the thing that could not be.

“Don’t be frightened, uncle,” said Arctura, “I am not dead. You left me to die; but, see, the place of death has become a place of praise; the sepulchre was always the only resurrection-house! Here I am alive! Oh, uncle! thank God.”

The earl stood motionless. His eyes were fixed upon her. His lips moved tremulously once or twice, but no word came. How much he took in of what she was saying, who can tell! At last he turned from her, glanced round the place, and said, “This is a great improvement!”

I wonder how it would be with some souls, if they were to wake up and find all the sins they had committed in this life, were but more or less hideous dreams! How many of them would then loathe the

sin itself! How many would remain capable of doing the same things over again? And how many burdened souls are there, who have not an idea of the power that lies in God's forgiveness to cleanse their consciousness from the defilement of what they have done, and who will not know it the least better for being told it, but will continue to say, "Even God cannot destroy the fact that I have done so!" Such care more about their own cursed shame than their Father's blessed truth! Such will rather excuse than confess. When a man confesses freely, and leaves excuse to God, then the truth makes him free, and he knows that the evil has gone from him, as a man knows that he is cured of his plague. "I did the thing, but I could not do it now; I am the same, yet not the same. I confess, I would not hide it, but I loathe it — and ten times the more that the evil thing was mine."

Had the earl been able to say this, he would have found his soul a cleansed chapel, new opened to the light and air — nay better — a fresh watered garden, in which the fruits of the spirit had begun to grow! But *not yet, alas, not yet!* is what has to be said over so many souls!

If only they were burdened to begin with! But when they go quite satisfied to inhabit rottenness, never perceiving that the thing nearest them, except God, whom they heed as little, is corruption! God's forgiveness is as the burst of a spring morning into the heart of winter; and he will make us pay the uttermost farthing: to let us go without that, would be the forgiveness of a demon, not of the eternally loving God.

Arctura could say nothing more. She turned and walked out and up the great stair, her uncle following her. She felt as if he might be preparing to stab her in the back as they went, but she would not even look behind her: no such thought was in the man, for, at the moment, no demon happened to be by his ear to suggest it to him, and even then there might have been a more prudent demon at the other ear to dissuade him — on the public stair! The poor earl had almost ceased to be a man: but then who is a man that acts from impulse and not from right!

The disappointment was to Arctura a great shock. Not once looking behind her she went to her room, rang the bell, sent for Donal, and told him what had passed.

“I will go to him,” said Donal; and Arctura said nothing more, leaving the whole matter in his hands.

The earl was in his own room, which was just as he had left it; Donal found him lying on the couch.

“My lord,” he said, “you must be aware that there are reasons why you should not present yourself here — in your niece’s house.”

He started from the sofa in one of his ready rages: whatever his visions might be, his rages were real enough. The language he used I need not repeat: I have given a slight flavor and no more, of the kind of thing already. With all the names of contempt and hatred he could heap upon him, he ordered Donal out of the room and out of the house. Donal stood and answered nothing till the rush of his wrath had somewhat abated. Then he spoke.

“My lord;” he said, “there is nothing I would not do to serve your lordship. I would go on my knees to

you to make you sorry. But I have now to tell you, with as little offence as may be, that if you do not walk quietly out of the house, you must be expelled like any other intruder ! ”

“ Intruder, you dog. ”

“ Intruder, my lord — the worst that could show himself here ! The man who would murder his hostess, his brother’s child — I do not mince matters, my lord — is surely the worst of intruders. ”

“ Good heavens ! cried the earl changing his tone with an attempted laugh, “ has the poor, hysterical girl succeeded in filling a man of common sense like you with her childish, ridiculous fancies ? I never moved a finger to injure her since the day I took her first in my arms when she was two hours old. ”

“ You must excuse me for preferring my lady’s testimony to yours, my lord, ” said Donal.

The earl caught up the poker and made a blow at his head. Donal avoided it. The blow fell on the marble chimney-piece and broke it. Donal wrenched the poker from him, while his arm was yet jarred by the impact.

“ My lord, ” he said, “ if you do not know that what you have just said is not true, it is because you have made yourself unable to distinguish between fact and imagination. I myself unchained her from the bed in the chapel — where you had left her to die. You were yet in the house when I did so. I locked the door, that you could not enter again. I have the key now. ”

“ You damned rascal ! if it had not been for you then, I should have gone again presently, and saved her life, and made her come to terms ! ”

“ But as you had lost the key, and feared to expose yourself, rather than that you went away, and left her to perish. And you wanted to compel her to marry your son, on the ground that the title and the property ought to go together, when with my own ears I heard your lordship tell him that he had no right to any title ! ”

“ What a man may say in a rage goes for nothing,” said the earl, but rather sulkily than fiercely.

“ Not so with what a wife writes in sorrow ! ” said Donal. “ I have heard the truth from your late wife as well as from your own mouth,” said Donal, not carefully considering his word.

“ The testimony of the dead will hardly be taken at second hand in any law-court,” rejoined the earl.

“ If after your lordship’s death the man who is now called Forgue should dare to assume the title of Morven, I will publish the fact and court inquiry. As to the title, I care nothing, but he shall succeed to no property if I can prevent it: he is too unworthy. Then let him, if he can, produce the proofs of your marriage. And now, my lord, I must again beg you to leave the house, else I must make you.”

His lordship glanced around the room as if looking for another weapon. Donal took him by the arm.

“ There is no room for more ceremony,” he said. “ I shall be sorry to be rough with your lordship, but you will compel me. Please remember I am the younger and the stronger man.”

As he spoke he let the earl feel the ploughman’s grasp on his arm. He saw it was useless to struggle. He threw himself again on the couch.

“ I will *not* leave the house; I am come home to die,” he cried, almost with a shriek. “ I am dying, I tell you; I cannot leave the house! Besides, I have no money. Forgue has got it all.”

“ There is a large sum due the estate unaccounted for!” said Donal.

“ It is lost — all lost, I tell you. I have nowhere to go to, and I am dying!”

He did look so utterly wretched, and indeed ill, that Donal’s heart smote him. He stood back a little from him, and gave himself time.

“ You would wish then to retire, my lord, I suppose?” he said, after his pause.

“ The sooner to be rid of you!” was the earl’s answer.

“ I fear, my lord, if you *will* stay here, you are not so soon to get rid of me! Have you brought Simmons with you, may I ask?”

“ No, damn him! He is like the rest of you: he has left me.”

“ I will help you to bed, my lord.”

“ Go about your business. I will get myself to bed.”

“ I will not leave you till I see you in bed,” said Donal with decision, and rang the bell.

When the servant came, he desired that Mrs. Brooks would come to him. She came instantly. Before his lordship had time even to look at her from where he lay on the couch, Donal asked her to be so good as get his lordship’s bed ready: — If she would not mind doing it herself, he would help her: he must see his lordship to bed himself. She looked whole books at him, but said nothing. Donal re-

turned her gaze with one of quiet confidence, which she read and correctly, as meaning, "I know what I am doing, Mistress Brooks. My lady must not turn him out. I will take care he does no mischief."

"What are you two whispering at there?" cried the earl; there had not been the ghost of a whisper! "Here am I at the point of death, and you will not let me go to bed!"

"Your room will be ready in five minutes, my lord," said Mrs. Brooks, and the two set to work in earnest.

When it was ready,

"Now, my lord," said Donal, returning to the sitting-room, "will you come?"

"When you are gone. I will have none of your cursed help!"

"My lord, I am not going to leave you."

With much grumbling, and a very ill grace, his lordship submitted, and Donal got him to bed.

"Now put that cabinet by me on the table," he said.

It was that in which he kept his drugs, and was just as he had left it.

Donal opened the window, took up the cabinet, and threw it out bodily.

With a bellow like that of a bull, the earl sprang out of bed, just as the crash reached their ears from below. He ran at Donal as if he would have sent him after the cabinet. Donal caught him and held him fast.

"My lord," he said, "I will nurse you, serve you, do anything for you, but for the devil I'll be damned if I move hand or foot. Not one drop of that hellish stuff shall pass your lips while I can help it."

“ But I shall die of the horrors ! ” shrieked the earl struggling to get to the window, as if he could yet do something to save his precious extracts, tinctures, and compounds.

“ We will send for the doctor,” said Donal. “ A very clever young fellow has come to the town since you left: perhaps he will be able to help you. I mean to do what I can to make your life of some value to yourself.”

“ None of that damned rubbish! My life is of no end of value to me as it is. Besides, it’s too late. If I were young now, with a constitution like yours, and the world before me, there might be some good in a paring or two of self-denial; but what’s the use of not stabbing your murderer for fear the clasp knife close on your hand, or not firing your pistol at him for fear of its bursting and blowing your brains out? ”

“ I have no desire to keep you alive, my lord; I only wish to let you get some of the good of this world before you pass on to the next. Not to lengthen your life infinitely would I have a hand in giving you one drop more of any one of those cursed drugs! ”

He rang the bell again.

“ You’re a friendly fellow,” grunted his lordship, and went back to his bed to meditate how to gain his desires.

Mrs. Brooks came.

“ Will you send down to Mr. Avory, the new surgeon,” said Donal, “ and ask him, in my name, to be so good as come up to the castle.”

The earl was really ill, so ill that he was himself doubtful, much as he desired them, whether, while

rendering him less sensible to them, any of his drugs would do other than increase his sufferings. He lay with closed eyes, a terrible expression of pain and of something like fear every now and then passing over his face. I doubt if his conscience troubled him much. It is in general those who through comparatively small sins have come to see the true nature of them whose consciences trouble them greatly. Those who have been able to go on from bad to worse through many years of moral decay, are seldom troubled as other men, or have any bands in their death. His lordship, it is true, suffered terribly at times because of the things he had done ; but it was through the medium of a roused imagination and not through a roused conscience — though doubtless the conscience was at the root of the rousing of the imagination.

He declared he would see no doctor but his old attendant Dowster ; yet all the time, he was longing for the young man to appear, and do what he could to save him from the dreaded jaws of death.

He came, and was shown into the sitting-room, where Donal went to him, leaving the door open that the earl might hear what passed between them. He told him he had sent for him without his lordship's consent, but that he believed he would not refuse to see him ; that he had been long in the habit of using narcotics and stimulants — in the wildest fashion, he suspected — though perhaps he knew more about them in some ways than anybody else ; that he, Donal, had sent for Mr. Ivory, trusting he would give his help to the entire disuse of them, for the earl was killing himself, body and soul, with them.

“To give them up entirely will cost him considerable suffering,” said Mr. Avory.

“I know that, and he knows it too, and does not want to give them up; but it is absolutely necessary he should be delivered from the habit; it has led him much too far already, and he knows it — none better.”

“If I am to undertake the case, I must act according to my own judgment,” said the doctor.

“It is I who have sent for you,” persisted Donal, “and we must have an understanding: you must promise two things, or take your fee and go.”

“I may as well hear what they are.”

“One is that you will at least make his final deliverance from the habit your object; the other that you will leave nothing in his own hands as to any medicine you give him.”

“I agree to both heartily; but all will depend on his nurse.”

“I will nurse him myself.”

After a question or two, the doctor went to his patient. The earl gave one glance at him, recognized in the young man a look of determination, felt unable to dispute with him, and submitted. But when the doctor would have applied to his wrist one of those instruments which record in curves the motions of the pulse, feared: he wanted something to quarrel about. He would have no such liberty taken with him!

“My lord, it is but to learn what we can of the action of your lordship’s heart,” said Mr. Avory.

“I’ll have no spying into the secrets of my heart! It goes just like other people’s!”

The doctor smiled, put his instrument aside, and laid his finger on the pulse instead ; his business was to help, not to conquer his patient, he said: if he could not do what he would, he would do what he could.

While he sat with the earl, Donal went to Lady Arctura, and told her what had passed. She approved of what he had done, and thanked him for understanding her so well.

A dreary time followed. More than once or twice the patient lay awake half the night, howling in misery, and accusing Donal of the most heartless cruelty. As sure as there was a sun in the heavens, what he begged would ease his pain and give him sleep, but he, calling himself a Christian, would not move a finger to deliver him ! He hated to see a fellow-being happy ! He delighted in beholding misery ! “ I was never so cruel to those I treated worst ! You sit there gloating over my sufferings ! ‘ Now,’ you say to yourself, ‘ he is in hell ! What a splendid twinge he had from that red-hot pair of tongs !— There, he’s got to drink that hair-soup !’— I’ll tell you, Grant, there’s nothing, even in the Persian hells, which beat all the rest, to come up to what I go through for want of my medicine ! Damn you, &c., &c. Give me that cabinet, will you ? ”

And so on, and on, and on.

“ How do you think you will be able to do without it,” returned Donal, on one such occasion, “ when you find yourself in the other world ? ”

“ I’m not there yet ! Besides, when I am, will be under new, quite new conditions, if indeed it be not unconditioned altogether. We’ll take time as it flies ;

and so, my dear boy, just go to my portmanteau — you know where it is, and get me — ”

“I will get you nothing of that sort.”

“You want to kill me ! ”

“What should you be kept alive for? To eat opium? I have other work than that. I would not move a finger to keep you alive with such a life. But I wouldn't mind dying to make you able to go on without it. There would be some good in that! May your lordship live many years, and not be afraid to die when the last of them comes ! ”

“Oh damn your preaching ! ”

But the power of the evil habit did abate a little, and though every now and then it seemed to return as strong as ever, it was plain the suffering did not continue so great. As to moral improvement, it was impossible to say anything with confidence.

The doctor, having little yet of a practice, was able to come and stay with his patient for some time every day, so that Donal might get some sleep; and when his lordship was pretty quiet, sometimes Davie, sometimes Mrs. Brooks, sometimes Lady Arctura herself would come and sit with him, and try what they could to make life endurable to him. Then Donal would lie down — but never farther off than the next room, lest some more violent fit should seize on his patient. He was more and more convinced that his madness was in its origin altogether a moral one, which is the worst madness of any, seldom failing at length more or less to affect the brain, and put the wretch beyond any control of his own. But as yet, though he had been repeatedly on the verge of finding force necessary, he had not been absolutely com-

pelled to use any ; and Donal was so little afraid of him, that he postponed it continually to the very last, and the last had never yet arrived.

By and by the gentle ministrations of his niece did seem to touch him a little. He would smile when she came into the room, and ask her how she did — with an appearance of interest he had never shown before. Once he sat looking at her for some time, then said :

“ I hope I did not hurt you much.”

“ When ? ” she asked.

“ Then,” he answered.

“ Oh, no, you did not hurt me.”

“ Another time I was very cruel to your aunt ; do you think she will forgive me ? ”

“ Yes, I do.”

“ Then you must have forgiven me ? ”

“ Of course I have.”

“ Then you think God will forgive me ? ”

“ I do, if you ask him. But you must leave off, you know, dear uncle ! ”

“ That’s more than any one can promise.”

“ If you want to do it, he will help you.”

“ How can he help me, after I’ve been wicked so long ? ”

“ He can help you by taking the body off you that has got so used to bad ways.”

“ Well, you *are* a fine comforter — to tell a man that perhaps God will be good enough to help him to be good by taking away his life ! Hadn’t I better kill myself at once and save him the trouble ? ”

“ It’s not the dying, uncle ; no amount of dying would ever make one good — so Mr. Grant says,”

she added, anxious not to appear to take upon herself the office of instructor to her uncle : "it can but perhaps make it less difficult to be good — I do not know."

"But you might after all refuse to be good. I feel pretty sure I should! so he had better let me alone as I am!"

"But God can do more than that to compel us to be good — a great deal more than that! Indeed, dear uncle, we *must* repent."

He said no more; and Donal, having heard a little of the conversation, thought it time to relieve Arctura. The earl was always best behaved with Donal; for as his helplessness grew, and the prospect of his getting better diminished, he became the more dependent upon him.

"I suppose you mean to marry that damned rascal of a tutor!" said the earl suddenly to Arctura, one day when she was seated with a piece of work by his bedside, and he had lain silent some time.

She started up in dread, thinking Donal might have heard, but was relieved to see him fast asleep on the couch in the next room. Had he been awake she would have called him.

"He would not thank you for the suggestion, I fear," she said, attempting a laugh. "He is far above me!"

"Is there *no* chance for Forgue then?"

"Not the smallest. I would rather I had died where you left me than —"

"Don't, if you love me, refer to that again!" he cried. "I was not myself — indeed I was not. It is impossible for you to understand what I used

to go through; and it was as impossible for me to tell what I really did, and what I only imagined myself doing."

"I will not mention it again if you can but tell me you have asked God to forgive you."

"I have asked him a thousand times."

"Then I will never speak of it again."

But these talks were upon one or two of his best times; at others he would be sullen, cantankerous, abusive to everybody that came near him; but as he grew less able to help himself, those about him grew more compassionate, and treated him like a spoiled, but really sickly child. Arctura said she did not believe her grandmother could have brought him up properly; something a good deal better might have been made of him, she thought. But then her grandmother had him full of untried confidences. It is more than doubtful if she did what she could, but Arctura had him after a life that had been fertile in cause for self-reproach, and when he lay in the net of severe illness, at the mercy of the spirit of God. He was just a bad old child—no wiser for being old, except in having learned that the ways of transgressors are hard.

One night Donal, hearing him restless, got up from the chair where he watched by him most nights, and saw that he was staring, but could not possibly be seeing with the bodily eyes, whose peculiar condition showed that they regarded nothing material. He gave a great sigh and his jaw fell. For a moment he seemed to Donal to be dead; but presently he came to himself, like one waking from a troubled sleep. he had left a terrible dream behind him, which

was yet pulling at the skirts of his consciousness.

“I’ve seen her!” he said. “She’s waiting for me, she says, to take me; but I could not make out where she said she was going to take me. She did not look very angry, but then she never did look very angry, even when I was worst to her!—Grant, you’ll be marrying some day, I suppose, but don’t lose sight of Davie. Make a man of him, I tell you, and his mother will thank you. She was a good woman, his mother, though I did what I could to spoil her! I never succeeded there; and that was how she kept her hold of me to the very last. If I had succeeded in spoiling her, as only a woman good to begin with can be spoiled, there would have been an end of her power over me, and there would then have been a genuine heir to the earldom of Morven! As it is there is nothing to be done! Only if I had not been such a fool and let it out, who would have been the worse? The man is no worse himself!”

“He is no better since he knew it,” said Donal.

“He’s a heartless, unnatural rascal, I know,” said his father: “he has made a damned fool of me! His mother must see it is not my fault! I would have set things right if I could, but it was too late; and then, you tell me, she has a hand in letting the truth out herself—leaving her letters about!—That’s some comfort! She won’t be hard on me! If only there was a chance of God being half as good to me as my poor wife! I *will* call her my wife in spite of all the priests in the stupid universe! She was my wife, and she deserved to be my wife; and if I had her now, I would marry her, just because

I know she would be foolish enough to like it, though I would not do it all the time she was alive, let her beg ever so! Where was the use, you know, of giving in, when I kept her in hand so easily that way! That was it! It was not that I wanted to do her any wrong. But the man should keep the lead. You musn't play out your last trump and not keep the lead. But it's ill managed that you never know when a thing is to go out of your power. If I had known my poor wife was going to die, I would have done whatever she wanted. We had merry times together, too! It was those cursed drugs that let the soul out of me for the devil to take its place! But I should like, just for once, to verify the old sensation — to know how I used to feel, that I might see for certain what I would do now if she were alive. I fancy there were some of that cursed curare in the last medicine I had! Look here now, Grant: if there were any way of persuading God to give me a fresh lease of life! You good people say he hears prayer: why shouldn't you ask him. I would make you any promise you please — give you any security you wanted that I would hereafter live a godly, righteous and sober life."

"But," said Donal, "suppose God read your heart, and saw that you would go on as bad as ever, and that it would only be the more difficult for him to do anything with you afterwards, if he gave you another moment?"

"He might give me a chance! I count it very hard he should expect a poor fellow like me to be as good as he is!"

"A poor fellow made in the image of God, though!"

“A very poor image, then!” said the earl with a sneer. “If that was all he could do that way, why did he not make us in some other body’s image? It might have been more to the purpose!”

Donal thought with himself for a moment.

“Did you ever know a good woman, my lord?” he asked.

“Know a good woman! hundreds of them! — The other sort, to be sure, was more to *my* taste! There was my own mother! she was rather hard on my father, now and then, I thought; but she was a good woman.”

“Suppose you had followed in her image, what then?”

“Oh, then you would have had some respect for me!”

“Then she was nearer the image of God than you, was she?”

“Thousands of miles nearer!”

“Did you ever know a very bad woman?”

“Know a very bad woman! Yes; hundreds that would have taken your heart’s blood as you slept to make a philtre of, to get the love of another man with!”

“Then there was a considerable difference between such a woman and your mother?”

“The one belonged to heaven, the other to hell — that was all the little difference!”

“Did you ever know a bad woman grow better?”

“No, never.— Stop! let me see! I did once know a woman — she was a married woman too — that made it all the worse — all the better I mean — I don’t know exactly which — who took poison — in

good earnest, too, and died — died, sir — died — when she came to herself, and knew what she had done! That was the only woman I ever knew that began — mind you, I say *began* — to grow better: how long she might have gone on if she hadn't taken that poison, but that fixed her good, you see!"

"If she had gone on, she might have got as good as your mother?"

"Oh, hang it! no; I did not say that!"

"I mean, with God teaching her all the time, for ten thousand years, say; and she always doing what he told her."

"Oh, well! I don't know anything about that. I don't know what God had to do with my mother being so good! She did not say much about him. She was none of your canting sort — not at all!"

Donal wondered whether, if she had told him a little more about the God he knew so little of now, he might not have been a little less unlike him.

"Well," he said, "there is an old story which I believe to be quite a true one — of a man who said he was the very image of God, and was as good, and a million times better than all the best women you have ever known anything about; and —"

"He couldn't have been much of a man, then!"

"He never knew, in himself I mean, what fear was."

"Ah!"

"He was born of a woman, like you; his mother was good, and he was better; your mother was good, and you are worse: whose fault is that?"

"Oh, my own, no doubt! I'm not ashamed to own it!"

“Would to God you were ashamed,” said Donal ; “for you shame your mother in being worse than she was. For you were made more in the image of God than you are now, or than *looks* at all likely now. I confess I have never seen much in you that, if I had not known him other ways, would have made me love the God in whose image you were made ! But happily I have a father and mother of my own, who are very different from you, my lord, and as like God as they can look in this world.”

“Of course ! of course ! In their position there are no such temptations as in ours !”

“There is one thing, my lord, I am sure of : that you will never be content with yourself, however much you may refuse to be ashamed, until you begin to look like the image in which you were made ; before which you will have begun not only to see that God is good, but so to feel that he is good that you care for nothing but that he should have his way with you and the whole world.”

“It will be long before I grow to that.”

“You will never have a moment’s peace until you begin. But it is no use talking. God has not made you miserable enough yet.”

“I am more miserable than you or any one can think.”

“Why don’t you cry out to him to deliver you ?”

“I would willingly kill myself if it weren’t for one thing.”

“It is just from yourself he would deliver you.”

“I would, I tell you, if it weren’t that I would put off seeing my wife as long as I can.”

“Don’t you want to see her ?”

“ I long for her sometimes more than tongue can tell.”

“ And you don't want to see her ? ”

“ Not just yet ; I should like to be a little better — to do something or other — I don't know what — first. I doubt if she would be willing to touch me just at present with that white, small, firm hand of hers she used to catch hold of me with when I hurt her. By Jove, if she had been a man, she would have made her mark in the world ! She had a will and a way with her ! If it hadn't been that she loved me — me, do you hear, you dog ! — me that there's nobody left in the world now to care a worm-eaten nut about ! It makes me as proud as Lucifer to think of it ! I don't care if there's never another to love me to the end of the world ! I have been loved as never man was loved ! All for my own sake, mind you ! In the way of money I was no great catch ; and as for the rank, she never got any good of that, nor would if she had lived till I was earl ; for she had a conscience — which I never had — and she would have got no good of it, knowing it was not her own — except in appearance ! ‘ But what, ’ I would say to her, ‘ what is any single thing of all the damned humbug but appearance ? Surely one appearance is as good as another appearance ! and that's logic anyhow, if it be nothing more ! ’ She would just smile — fit to make a mule sad ! I was too proud to be sad. And then when her baby was dying, and she wanted me to take her for a minute, while she got her something, and I wouldn't ! She laid down the baby, and got it herself, and when she came again, the child, absurd little thing ! was — was gone — dead. I mean gone dead, never to cry

any more, and lay there like a lump of white clay. She looked at me, and never in this world smiled again — nor cried either — all I could do to make her do either !”

The wretched man burst into tears, and the heart of Donal gave a great leap for joy. Common as tears are, fall as they may for the foolishest things, they may yet cause joy in Paradise. The man himself may not even know why he weeps and his tears may yet indicate the turn on the road to hell towards the gates of the celestial city. The earl was as far from a good man as man well could be ; there were millions of spiritual miles between him and the image of God ; he had wept, it was hard to say at what — plainly not at his own cruelty, not at his wife’s suffering, not in pity for the little child whose mother had asked her father to take her, but whose father had refused, so that the little soul went away with no human embrace at the parting ; no human being, least of all himself, could have told why he wept ; but there was in those tears some contact of his human soul with the great human soul of God : they were the beginning of a possible communion, nothing less, with the Father of all ! Surely God saw this, and knew the heart he had made — saw the flax smoking yet. He who will not let us out until we have paid the uttermost farthing, rejoices over the offer of the first golden grain in payment. Easy to please is he — hard indeed to satisfy.

Donal dropped on his knees and prayed : “ O Father of us all ! ” in whose hands are these unruly hearts of ours, we cannot manage ourselves ; we ruin our own selves, but in thee is our help found ! ”

Prayer went from him ; he rose from his knees.

“Go on ; go on ; you’re not going to stop yet !” cried the earl. “Perhaps he will hear you — who can tell !”

Donal went down on his knees again.

“Oh God !” he said, “thou knowest us, whether we speak to thee or not : take away this man’s hardness of heart. Make him to love thee ;” and there he stopped, for he could say no more, and rose again.

“I can’t pray, my lord,” he said ; “I don’t know why. It seems as if nothing I tried to say meant anything. I can’t pray now. I will pray for you when I am alone.”

“Are there so many devils about me that an honest fellow can’t pray in my company ?” cried the earl.

“I will pray myself, in spite of the whole swarm of them, big and little ! O God, save me ! I don’t want to be damned. I will be good if thou wilt make me. I don’t care about it myself, but thou canst do as thou pleasest. It would be a fine thing if a rascal like me were to escape the devil, through thy goodness after all. I’m worth nothing, but I *should* like to see my wife again ! for Christ’s sake — Isn’t that the way, Grant ? — Amen.”

Donal had dropt on his knees once more when the earl began to pray. He uttered a hearty Amen. The earl turned sharply towards him, and saw that he was weeping. He put out his hand to him, and said,

“You’ll stand my friend, Grant !”

CHAPTER XLIII.

A CONFESSION.

SUDDENLY the strength of Lady Arctura seemed to give way. She had a sharp attack of hemorrhage, and from that hour began to sink. But it was spring, with the summer at hand, and they hoped she would soon recover sufficiently to be removed to a fitter climate: she did not herself think so. She said little, but had hardly a doubt that her time was come. She continued calm, and was often cheerful, but her spirits were variable. Donal's heart was at times sorer than he had thought it ever could be again.

One day as he sat in her room, having been reading a little to her—sat looking at her, and not knowing how sad the expression of his countenance was, she looked up at him, smiled, and said,

“You think I am unhappy! You could not look at me like that if you did not think so! I have noticed for a long time that nothing else makes you ever look unhappy. But I am not; I am only tired; I am not unhappy. I hardly know now what unhappiness is! Sometimes, when I daresay I look as if I were unhappy, I am full of happiness. I am only waiting for more life. It is on the way to me; I feel that it is, because I am so content with everything; I would have nothing other than it is. It is

very hard for God, our father, that his children will not trust him to do with them whatever he pleases! I am sure, Donal, this world is all wrong, and all on the way to be wondrously right; but it will cost God much time and labor yet: we, however, will cost him as little as we can—won't we, dear friend!—oh Donal, if it hadn't been for you, God would have been to me now far off as before! I should have had for a god—something half an idol, and half a commonplace, tyrannical man—I should not have seen the glory of God in the face of Christ Jesus! and however should I have been saved, worshipping such a notion as that?"

"No; no! if God had not sent me," returned Donal, "he would have sent somebody else—that would have been all, my lady."

"I am very glad he sent you though! I should never have loved any other so much!"

Donal's eyes filled with tears. He was simple as a child. No male vanity, no self-exultation, that a woman should love him and tell him she loved him sprang up in his heart. He knew she loved him; he loved her; all was so natural that it could not be otherwise: he never presumed to dream that the great lovely lady would once think of him as he had thought of Ginevra. He was her servant, willing and loving as any angel of God: that was all—and enough!

"You're not vexed with your pupil, are you?" she resumed, again looking up in his face, this time with a rosy flush over her own.

"Why?" said Donal, wondering.

"For speaking so to my master?"

“Angry because you love me!”

“No, of course!” she said. “You knew that must be! How could I but love you—better than any one else in all the world! You have given me life! I was dead—you have been like another father to me!” she added, with a smile of heavenly tenderness. I could not have spoken to you like this, though, if I had not known that I was dying.”

The word shot a sting as of fire through Donal’s heart.

“You are always a child, Donal,” she went on: “and death is making a child of me: it makes us all children; so that, as if we were two little children together, I tell you, for I will not put the wrong word to anything—I tell you I love you, Donal.—Don’t look like that,” she continued; “you must not forget what you have been teaching me all this time—that the will of our God, the perfect God, is all in all! He is not a God far off: oh, Donal, to know that is enough to have lived for if one never learned anything more in all her life! You have taught me that, and I love you—love you next to God and his Christ, with a true heart fervently.”

Donal was crying; he could not speak. He was sure she was dying.

“Donal,” she began again, and she spoke solemnly, “I know in my own soul, as it lies bare to God, that I have nothing to be ashamed of in speaking so to you. He hears it all, and it pleases him I should so speak. Would you mind marrying me before I go? I want to be able to say in Heaven, when I have to speak about you, ‘My husband taught me this,’ ‘my husband used to say that to me!’ I should

like to say to Jesus, 'Thank you, my Lord, my Master, for the husband you made, and taught, and sent to me, that I might be his child and his sister and his wife all in one!' There, Donal! I'm tired. Please go and think it over. I don't want an answer all at once. Don't fancy you must say *yes*. If you say *no*, I shall only say, 'He knows best what is best!' I shall not be ashamed; and I should deserve to be punished like a naughty child if I were angry. Only one thing I must warn you of—think of me warning you!—only ghosts do come for warning, and I am very nearly a ghost—one thing—you must not once think what the world would say, or think, or do in the matter: of all people we have nothing to do with the world! We have nothing to do but with God and love! If he be pleased with us, we can afford not to heed what his silly children think of us—who mind only what their vulgar nurses say, and not what their great beautiful father says: we need not mind them—need we?—I wonder at myself," she went on, for yet Donal—and it was small wonder—could not speak, "—being able to speak like this; but it is what I have been thinking for a long time, as I lie awake at night. I am never afraid at night now—not though I lie awake sometimes till the morning: 'perfect love casteth out fear,' you know. I have God to love, and Jesus to love, and you to love, and my own father to love! When you know him, you will see how good a man can be without having been brought up with the sheep! But I am talking nonsense! Oh, Donal, do say something, or I shall cry, and crying kills me."

She was sitting on a low chair, with the sunlight

across her lap, and the firelight on her face. Donal knelt down gently, and laid his hands in the sunlight on her lap, just as if he were going to say his prayers at his mother's knee. She laid both her hands on his.

"I have something to tell you," he said; "and then you must speak again."

"Tell me," said Arctura, with a little gasp.

"When I came here," said Donal, "I thought my heart was so nearly broken that it could not love — that way, I mean, — any more, though it could hold the love of God all the same; and as God makes those who love him love, I loved you from the very first. There was something else in it too: you were like my queen, and I would have died for you as my fathers in the old times would have died for their chief. But I should have scorned myself for fancying that you loved me more than just to do anything for me that ought to be done. When I saw you troubled, I longed to take you up in my arms, and carry you like a lovely delicate young thing that must be tended like one of God's birds, as Dante calls the angels, that had got away somehow, and had been hurt, and put in a cage; but never once, my lady, did I think of your caring for my love. It was yours as a matter of course. I do not think I could ever have had the presumption to imagine such a thing; but ever since the misery of her refusing to kiss me just once — for a good-by, I felt far too clownish and ugly for any lady to look at: — I knew plenty about sheep and dogs, but nothing about ladies, except how worthy of God's making they looked! I knew about hillsides and skies, but not about draw-

ing-rooms! And I thought love was over for me!"

He stopped. Her hands lay upon his, and did not move to leave them, only fluttered a little as she said,

"Is she still — is she — alive?"

"Oh yes, my lady."

"Then don't you think she may change her mind?"

Donal laughed — an odd laugh, but it did Arctura good to hear it.

"No danger of that, my lady! She has got the best husband in the world — a much better than — than I should have been."

"That can't be!"

"Why, my lady, he's Sir Gibbie! She's Lady Galbraith! I would never have wished her mine if I had known that she loved Gibbie. I love her next to him; and you would love her if you knew her!"

"Then — then —"

"What, my lady?"

"Won't you say something to me?"

"What should I say? What God pleases is settled for me — fast as the roots of the universe, and lovely as its blossom."

Arctura burst into tears.

"Then you cannot love me! You do not care for me!"

Donal began to understand. In some things he went ahead so fast that he could not hear the cry behind him. Now he understood that she had spoken and was listening in vain for the echo that ought to have followed: she thought herself un-

loved, for the signs of love had not appeared. The delight of love awoke in him. He rose, took her up in his arms like the child to whom he had been likening her, and with her head on his shoulder, and his face bent down on hers, went walking about the room with her, petting and soothing her, and holding her close to his heart.

“I love you,” he said, “and love you to all eternity! I have love enough to live upon now, if you should die this night, and God will that, like the Apostle John, I tarry till he come. God, thou art too good to me! It is more than my heart will hold! Thou art a God indeed who makest men and women, and givest them to each other, and art not one moment jealous of the love wherewith they love each other!”

So said Donal—but alas for the love wherewith they love each other! There were small room for God to be jealous of *that*! It is the little love with which they love each other, the great love, so to call it, with which they love themselves, that hurts the heart of their father. It is indeed but a small part of what is called love between men and women that is worthy of the name of love!

Arctura's arms, which were round Donal's neck, at length signed a gentle prayer for release: when he set her gently down in her chair again, her face was more beautiful than he had ever seen it before, and whatever it may have indicated of her physical condition, the rose that bloomed there was the rose of a deeper health than any she had yet known. For these children of God's heart were of the blessed few who have so far returned into the true paradise

that they love the more because He is present, who feel their souls naked before Him, and are not ashamed. Let him that hears understand; if he understand not, let him hold his peace, and it will be the better for him. He who has no place for this love also in his religion, who thinks he can be more holy without it, cannot have entered into the thought of God when He said, "Let us make man!" He does not believe in the holy creation of God's men and women. He may be a saint, but he cannot be a man after God's own heart. The complete man alone is the saved man. The saint is but on the way thither, and has to be saved from more than sin.

"When shall we be married?" said Donal.

"Soon, soon," answered Arctura; "I am going very fast!"

"To-morrow, then?"

"There is no need of such haste as that—now that we understand each other," she added with a rosy smile. "I want to be married to you before I die—that is all—not just to-day or to-morrow."

"When you please, my love," said Donal.

She laid her head on his bosom.

"We need not make haste," she said. "We are as good as married now. We both know that each loves the other. How I shall wait for you in heaven! You will be mine, you know—a little bit mine—won't you?—even if you should marry some beautiful lady when I am gone. I shall love her when she comes."

"Arctura," said Donal, "you do not know me yet!" and she never ventured another word of that kind to him.

CHAPTER XLIV.

THE MARRIAGE.

BUT this opening of the windows of heaven, the unspeakable rush of life through channels too narrow and banks too weak to hold its tide, caused a terrible inundation: the red flood again broke its banks, and weakened all the land. The next day she called Mr. Graeme, and sent him to fetch the family lawyer from Edinburgh. Alone with him she gave instructions concerning her will. I fancy from what dropped from the man of business afterwards that she *had* to behave to him with what he counted imperiousness. He said little, but shrugged those shoulders of his, loaded with so many petty weights, bowed down with so many falsest opinions concerning men and things. The day will come when many a man wise in his generation will show his honesty in confessing himself a most confounded fool. He would have expostulated with my lady on the way she chose to leave her money.

“Sir!” she said.

“You have a cousin who inherits the title!” he suggested.

“Mr. Fortune,” she returned, “I am not unacquainted with my own family. Perhaps I know a little more of it than you do. I have not much time to

spare, and I did not send for you to consult you, but to ask you to draw up my will according to my wishes."

"I beg your pardon, my lady," rejoined the lawyer, "but there are things which may make it the duty of one in whom the confidence of a family is placed, to speak out."

"Speak then; say whatever you feel it your duty to say: I will listen — for *your* sake — that you may ease your mind."

Mr. Fortune straightway began a long, common-sense, worldly talk on the matter, nor once repeated himself. When he ceased,

"Now, have you eased your mind?" she asked.

"I have, my lady."

"Then listen to my instructions. If it goes against your conscience to do as I wish, say so, and I will send for another; there is no necessity that you should hurt either your feelings or your prejudices."

Mr. Fortune said not a word more, but took his instructions, rose, and was about to go.

"When will you bring me the will to sign?" she asked.

"In the course of a week or two, my lady."

"If it is not in my hands by the day after to-morrow, I will send for a gentleman from the town to draw it up."

"You shall have it, my lady," said Mr. Fortune. And she did have it, and the will was signed and witnessed, no one knowing a word of the contents except themselves two.

After this she sank more rapidly, and grew very

weak. Donal said no word about the marriage. She should do just as she pleased! He was now nearly all day by her bedside, reading to her when she was able to listen, talking to her, or sitting silent, when she was not.

Mrs. Brooks now gave herself entirely to the nursing of her ladyship, and Arctura had at once told her the relation in which she and Donal stood to each other. It cost the good woman many tears, for she thought such a love one of the saddest things in a sad world.—You think so too? I do not.

The earl about this time was a little better, though there was no prospect of even a temporary recovery. But although he required less nursing, Donal did not neglect him for the more absorbing duty of waiting on Arctura. He had grown much gentler, and something of sadness had partially displaced the sullenness of his bearing. He seemed to have become in a measure aware of the bruteness of the life he had hitherto led, and have had a glimpse of something better. It is wonderful what the sickness which stupid men and women regard as the one evil thing, can do towards their redemption from an eternal slavery! True, they do not consciously desire any such redemption—far from it!—but there is another who does; and as their very existence is his, he gives them no choice in the matter. He showed concern at his niece's illness, and as she was now again in the sunny room on the lower floor, had himself carried down every other day to see her for a few minutes, and learn how she was going on. She received him always with the greatest gentleness, and I believe some genuine affection for her

had begun to wake in him by the time she became too ill to receive his visits. Her last words to him he would often repeat to himself.

“If there is anything I can do for you — when we meet again, dear uncle, be sure I shall be ready.”

“Tell my wife,” had come to his lips, but no farther. He postponed the message, and did not see her again in this world.

It was a morning in the month of May —

The naked twigs were shivering all for cold,

when Donal, who was lying on the couch in the neighboring room, heard Mrs. Brooks call him :

“My lady wants you, sir,” she said.

He started up, and went to her.

“Send for the minister,” she whispered — not Mr. Carmichael ; he does not know *you* ! Send for Mr. Graeme too : he and Mrs. Brooks will be witnesses. I must call you *husband* once before I die !”

“I hope you will many a time after !” he returned.

She smiled on him with a look of love unutterable.

“Mind,” she said, holding out her arms feebly, but drawing him fast to her bosom, “that this is how I love ! When you see me dull and stupid, and I hardly look at you — for you know dying makes one stupid while it is going on, then say to yourself, this is not how she loves me ; it is only how she is dying ! She loves me and knows it, and by and by will be able to make me too know it !”

They were precious words for him to brood over afterwards !

With some careful questioning on the part of the minister, to satisfy himself that she, so plainly at the gate of death, knew what she said, and desired to be called wife before she went—and not without some disapproving shakes of the head to signify that nothing so earthly ought to occupy the thoughts of his subjects in the presence of King Death, he did as he was requested, and wrote a certificate of the fact, which was duly signed and witnessed by the three.

“But he took it out in his prayer!” said mistress Brooks with indignation.

The bridegroom gave his bride one gentle kiss, and withdrew with the clergyman to the next room.

“This is a strange proceeding!” said the minister.

“Not so strange perhaps as it looks, sir!” said Donal.

“On the brink of the other world!”

“The other world and its brink too are his who ordained marriage!”

“For this world only.”

“The gifts of God are without repentance,” said Donal.

“I have heard of you,” returned the clergyman, “as one of those who do not hesitate for their own ends to misuse scripture!”

He had a painful doubt that he had been drawn into some plot!

“Sir!” said Donal sternly, “if you thought there was any impropriety in the ceremony you have now performed, why did you perform it? I beg you will reserve the remarks you ought to have made before. And for your own sake be silent concerning the

affair. If I hear it spoken off, I shall know who has revealed it, and shall not spare him. Oblige me by accepting your fee."

The man was not a little astonished at the tone assumed by Donal; but he saw at once that the less said the better. He was a poor man, too, and the fee was a godsend. His eye fell before Donal's, and he stiffly took his leave: he was a young man with a high sense, if not of the dignity of his office, then of the dignity his office conferred on him.

Donal had next a brief interview with Mr. Graeme. The factor did not know for what he had been summoned, and was in a condition of some bewilderment. He little suspected, however, how the thing bore on his own future, and readily gave Donal a pledge of silence for the present concerning the ceremony. He regarded it as the mere whim of a dying girl, which, for the sake of the family, had better be ignored and forgotten. How it might affect the property he could only conjecture. There was the will for one thing! But if the marriage was proved, the will, made before it, was of no avail!

I will not pain my readers by lingering over the quiet, gently sad time that followed. Donal was to Arctura, as she said, like father, brother, husband, all in one. Through him she reaped the harvest of the world, in spite of false teaching, murder, temptation and death, and was passing from the battle-field of the harvest victorious indeed! On the face of her bridegroom lay calm—for within was a peace the world could not give or take away. He loved now with a love that cast the love of the former days into the shadow of a sweet but undesired re-

membrance. A long life lay before him whence the delight of his eyes would have vanished; but he would have plenty work to do; and such was the very foundation of the love between him and Arctura that every time he knew in himself that he was doing the work God had given him to do, he would feel he was laying a fresh bond between him and her: she was his because they were the Father's, whose will was the life and love of the universe.

"I think," said Donal, sitting that same night by her bed, "when my mother dies, she will go at once to somewhere near you; for there never was more godlike woman than she: I will, if I may, send you a message by her. But it can only tell you what you will know — that I love you and am waiting to come to you."

Oh the stupidity of calling oneself a Christian, and doubting if we shall know our friends hereafter. It makes me angry to hear such silly horror from such mouth. For those who do not believe it is more than natural, but for those who profess to believe — it merely shows what a ragged scarecrow is what they call their faith: it is not worth that of many an old Jew, or that of some pagans.

"I shall not be far from you, dear, I think — sometimes," she said, speaking very low, and with difficulty. If you dream anything nice about me, think I am thinking of you. If you should dream anything not nice about me, think something is lying to you about me. I don't know if I shall be allowed to come near you, but if I am — and I think I shall be — sometimes, I shall laugh to myself to think how near I am, and you thinking me a long way off! But

any way, all will be well, for the great life, our God, our father, is at the heart of all."

After that she fell into a deep sleep, and slept for some hours. Then she sat up suddenly, and Donal went behind her and supported her. She looked a little wild, shuddered, murmured something which neither he nor mistress Brooks could understand, and threw herself back into her husband's arms. From troubled suffering her face changed to an expression of divinest, loveliest content, and she was gone.

CHAPTER XLIV.

THE WILL.

WHEN her will was read, it was found that she had left everything to Donal, except some legacies, and an annuity to Mrs. Brooks.

When Mr. Graeme rose to go, congratulating Donal as he did so, politely, but without any special cordiality, Donal said to him :

“If you are walking towards home, I will walk with you : I have something to talk to you about.”

“I shall be happy,” said Mr. Graeme. He was feeling it not a little hard that the heir presumptive to the title should have to tend the family property in the service of a peasant.

“Lord Morven cannot live long,” said Donal. “Perhaps it is not to be wished that he should.”

Mr. Graeme made no answer. Donal resumed.

“I think I ought to let you know at once that you are the successor to the title.”

“I believe you owe the knowledge to my information !” said the factor, almost contemptuously.

“Not at all,” returned Donal : “after Lord Forgue you told me. I tell you — after Lord Morven.”

“I am at loss to know on what you found such a statement.”

“No one knows it but myself. Lord Morven knows that his son has no right to succeed, but I do

not think he knows that you have. I am prepared, if not to prove, at least to convince you that he and the lady who passed for his wife were never married."

Mr. Graeme was for a moment silent. Then he laughed a little laugh — not a pleasant one. "Another of Time's clownish tricks!" he said to himself: "The head of the family has to bow to the peasant proprietor of its land! — happy if he is allowed to manage it for him!" Donal did not like his manner, yet saw how natural it was.

"I hope you have known me long enough," he said, "to believe that I did not contrive my marriage for the sake of the property?"

"Excuse me, Mr. Grant, but the girl was dying, and you knew it!"

"I do not understand you."

"What did you marry her for then?"

"To call her my wife."

"What was the good of that?"

"Does it need explanation? Well — let it pass! It is enough that we both wished it because we loved each other."

"It will be difficult to convince the world that such was your sole motive."

"Having no respect whatever for the judgment of the world, I shall be satisfied if I convince you. The world needs never hear of the thing. Would you, Mr. Graeme, have had me, loving her as I do, and she loving me as she does, refuse to marry her because the world, or indeed not a few honest men like yourself, would say I could have had regard only to the property?"

"Pray, do not put such a question to me; I am not

the proper person to answer it. This much only will I say — that there is scarce a man in a hundred millions who would not have done the same, or whom the rest would not blame for doing it. It would have been better for you, however, that there had been no will.”

“How?”

“It makes it look more like a progressive scheme. The will might have been disputed.”

“Why do you say — *might have been*?”

“Because it is not worth disputing now. If the marriage stands, it annuls the will.”

“I suppose she did not know that. Or perhaps she desired to make it sure, thinking if the marriage would not hold the will would. But I knew nothing of it.”

“You did not?”

“Of course I did not.”

Mr. Graeme held his peace. For the first time he doubted Donal's word.

“But what I wanted to have a little talk with you about,” resumed Donal, “was this: whether you think your duty is all to the owner of the land, or that you owe the tenants anything.”

“That is easy to answer: as merely employed by another, I owe the tenant nothing.”

He would have given a somewhat different answer in other circumstances, or to another questioner.

“Even to the grinding of the faces of the poor?” asked Donal.

“Every legal advantage I ought to take for my employer, whether in my own ideas equitable or not.”

It was mere opposition to Donal that made him take the position.

“Then, what would you say if the land were your own? Would you say you had it solely for the good of yourself and your family, or for the good of the tenants as well?”

“I should very likely reason that what was good for them would in the long run be good for me.—But if you want to know how I have managed things with the tenants, there are not a few intelligent men amongst them, and not at all likely to be prejudiced in favor of the factor!”

“I wish I could have persuaded you to talk openly with me,” said Donal.

“I would rather keep my own place,” rejoined Mr. Graeme.

“You speak as one who finds a change in me,” returned Donal; “but there is none.”

So saying, he shook hands with him, bade him good morning, and turned back disappointed.

“I failed to lead properly up to the point,” he said to himself.

Mr. Graeme was a good sort of a man, and a gentleman; but he was not capable of meeting Donal on the ground on which he stepped out to meet him: on that level he had never set foot. There is nothing more disappointing to the generous man, than the way in which his absolute frankness is met by the man of the world, always looking out for motives, and imagining them—*after what is in himself*—where he does not find them.

There was great confidence between the brother and sister, and as he walked homeward, Mr. Graeme was not so well pleased with himself as to think with satisfaction on the report of the interview he could

give Kate. He could not accuse himself with regard to anything he had said, but he vaguely knew that his behavior had been largely influenced by an unconfessed jealousy of the low-born youth who had supplanted him; for, if young Graeme could not succeed to the title, neither could he have succeeded to the property; and but for the will or the marriage, perhaps but for the two together, he would himself have come in for both! The marriage might be disputed, he thought, but then there was the will: annul the marriage, and it was of force, nor did he think anything would thereanent appear to the discredit of Donal, or to support the notion of undue influence.

He told his sister, as nearly as he could, all that had passed.

"If he wanted me to talk to him at my ease," he said, "why did he first tell me that about Forgue? It was infernally stupid of him. But what is bred in the bone, etc.! He can never be a gentleman!"

"He is a gentleman in the best sense of the word," said his sister. "That you say he is not, makes me think you are vexed with yourself. He is a little awkward sometimes, I confess, but only when he is looking at a thing from some other point of view, and does not like to say that we ought to have been looking at it from the same: he never stops till he has made us do so!—What have you been saying to him, Hector?"

"It's rather what I have not been saying," answered her brother. "He would have had me open out to him, but I wouldn't. How could I! It would have looked as if I wanted to secure my office!"

Hang it all! I have a good mind to throw the thing up! How is a Graeme to serve under a bumpkin?"

"The man is a scholar anyhow, and a poet!" said the lady.

"Pooh! pooh! what's a poet?"

"One that may or may not be as good a man of business as yourself when it comes to be required of him."

"Come, come! don't you turn against me, Kate! That would be too much!"

Miss Graeme made no reply. She was turning over in her mind all she knew of Donal, as a guide to a guess at what her brother had not let him come to. Presently she made him tell her over again all they had said to each other. "I tell you, Hector," she said when he had ended, "you never made such a fool of yourself before! If I know human nature, and I think I do as well as opportunity has allowed me, that man is not like any you have had to do with before. It will take a woman, ay, and a better woman than your sister here, to understand him! But I think I see a little farther into him than you do. It's my conviction he's one — where there may be another I don't know — who, having never had money enough to learn the bad uses of it, and never having formed habits it needs money to satisfy, having no ambitions for the world, living in books rather than in places, and for pleasures having more at his command in himself than the richest of men can get by his riches — he is one who, I say, would find money a bore and an impediment to his happiness — the worse that he would have a strong sense of duty with regard to it. Besides, though he does not care a straw for

the judgment of the world where it differs from him, he would be sorry to seem to the world to do wrong where his judgment and the world's agree: as he would scorn to marry any woman for her money, he would not have the world think he would."

"Ah, Katy, you are wrong there! The world would entirely approve of that!"

"I will only shift my position then for a better — and say — he would not willingly seem to the world to have done a thing he himself thinks wrong. I believe that man thinks himself sent into the world to teach it something: he would not have it thrown in his teeth, that, after all, he looks to the 'main chance' as keenly as any other! He would starve before he would have men say so falsely. I am as sure he would not marry Lady Arctura for her money, as I am sure that Lord Fergue would — or that you would if you had had a chance. — There, Hector! My conviction is that the bumpkin, — there is no occasion to change the epithet — in his talk with you sought a fit opening to explain that the will was to go for nothing, and that there was no necessity for a word being said about the marriage. You know he made you promise not to mention it!"

"Now, isn't that just like you women! The man you take a fancy to is always head and shoulders above other men! I hope for his sake as well as your own you will not let your opinion of him be too evident. Such a man is worth his salt!"

"I don't deserve the taunt," said Miss Graeme. "And I tell you that man will never marry again!"

"Stay till he gets over this: who knows but he may ask you?"

“If he did ask me, I might take him, but I should never think so much of him as I do now!”

“Heroic Kate!”

“If you had been a little more of that Hector, you would have understood him — considerably more to your advantage.”

“You don’t imagine I would be —”

“I wouldn’t have you pledge yourself in a hurry — even to me!” said Kate. “Leave plenty of sea-room about your boat. You don’t know what you would or would not do. Mr. Grant knows, but you do not.”

“Mr. Grant again! — Well!”

“Well! — we shall see!”

And they very soon did see. For that same evening Donal called, and asked to see Miss Graeme. She said she was sorry to say her brother was down in the town. Donal said it was herself he wanted to see.

“I will speak openly to you, Miss Graeme,” he said, “for I imagine you will understand me better than your brother; or perhaps I ought rather to say — I shall be better able to explain myself to you than to him.”

There was that in his face which fixed her regard — a calm exaltation, as of a man who had outlived weakness and faced the eternal. Something like the spirit of a smile hovered about his mouth and eyes, embodied now and then in a grave, but very sweet, contented smile: the man seemed full of content, not with himself, but with something he would gladly share with you. A short pause followed.

“I have been talking with your brother,” he said.

“I know,” she answered. “I am afraid he did

not meet you as he ought. He is a good and honorable man, my brother; but like most men he is human, and needs a moment to pull himself together. Some of us, Mr. Grant, when suddenly called upon, do not answer either from the deepest or the best that is in us. Hector is not the man to make the best of himself in unexpected circumstances: but when the first assault of imagined injury is over, he is as reasonable as any man."

"The fact is simply this," said Donal: "I do not want this property. I thank God for Lady Arctura — her wealth I do not desire."

"But may it not be your duty to keep it, Mr. Grant? — Pardon me for suggesting duty to one who knows so much more about it than I do."

"I have reflected, and do not think God wants me to keep it. The great gift of her does not surely enslave me to all the accidents about her! Should I, because I love her, hoard her gowns and shoes?"

Then first Miss Graeme noted that he never spoke of his wife as in the past.

"But there are duties to people involved," she said. "You have made me think about many things, Mr. Grant; and my brother and I have had many talks as to what we would do if the land were ours."

"And yours it shall be," said Donal, "if you will take it as I should if I had not other work to do — as a trust for the good of all whom the land supports."

"I will tell my brother what you say," answered Miss Graeme, with a sense of victory in her heart, for was it not as she had divined?

Donal thought the teacher's a higher calling than the landowner's —

“For,” said he, “it is better to help make good men than happy tenants. These in their turn will be good landlords.—Besides,” he added, “I know how to do the one, and I do not know how to do the other. There would always be a prejudice against me, as not to the manner born; and they would regard all changes I might make as the result of my lowly birth, and foolish fancy for reform, not as springing from the love of the eternally true and just.—If your brother accept my offer,” he went on, “I hope he will not take it ill, or think me interfering, if I talk with him sometimes concerning the principles of the thing, seeking to arrive at the truth of the relation of man to man in the matter. Things go wrong because men have such absurd and impossible notions about *possession*. They are always trying to possess, to call their own, things which it is impossible, from their very nature, ever to possess or make their own. Then no power was ever given to a man over other men for his own sake, and whoever uses it so, the nearer he comes to seeming success, the more utter will prove his discomfiture. Talk to your brother about it, Miss Graeme. Tell him that, as the heir to the title, and as the head of the family, with all the prestige that gives, he has it in his power to do more than any other with the property, and I will gladly make it over to him altogether and without reserve. I would not have my attention taken from my own calling.”

“I will tell him what you say. I told him he had misunderstood you, for I saw into your generous thought.”

“It is not generous at all. My dear Miss Graeme,

you do not know how little of a temptation such things are to me. There are some who care only to inherit straight from the first father. You may say the earth is the Lord's: and therefore a part of our inheritance: I admit it, but even the earth itself I must possess in a far deeper, grander, and truer way than calling the land my own, before I shall count it a possession. I want to have everything just as the Maker of me wants me to have them. "I will call on you again to-morrow. I must now go back to the earl. Poor man, he is sinking fast! but I verily think he is more at peace in his mind than he has ever been all his life before!"

He took his leave, and Miss Graeme had plenty to think of before her brother's return: if she was a little triumphant over him, it may well be pardoned her.

He was ashamed, and not a little humbled too by what she told him. He did not wait for Donal to come to him, but went up to the castle early the next morning, nor was he mistaken in trusting Donal to believe that it was not eagerness to retrace in his own interest the false step he had taken, but eagerness to show his shame of having behaved so ungenerously, for Donal received him just as he wished himself understood, and they had a long talk together. Donal found him all the readier for his blunder to hear what he had to say, while the proof he was giving of his own disinterestedness was endlessly potent. Their interview ended in Donal's thinking still better of him than before, and being satisfied that, up to his light, the man was honest, which is saying much in sight of God as well as in

sight of man, and thence that he was open to conviction, and ready to see both sides of a question. But their conversation was curtailed by a summons for Donal to go to the earl.

After his niece's death, no one would do for him but Donal; nobody could please him but Donal. His mind as well as his body were much weaker. But the intellect, great thing as it is, yet is but the mere soil out of which, or rather in which, higher things must grow; and it is well when that soil is not too strong, so to speak, for the most gracious and lovely of plants to root themselves in it. When the said soil is proud and unwilling to serve, it is well indeed that it should be thinned and pulverized with sickness that such plants may take root in it: when they get up a little, they will use all the riches and all the strength of the strongest soil.

"Who will have the property now?" he asked one day. "I have heard that my factor has a pretty near chance, but I never inquired. You see if my son was not to have it, I did not care much who did."

"Mr. Graeme will have it," said Donal. "Title and property both will be his."

"And my poor Davie?" said the earl, with a look of pitiful question in the eyes that gazed up into Donal's face.

"I will see to him," said Donal. "When you and I meet, my lord — by and by, I shall not be ashamed before you."

His words satisfied the earl. He sent for Davie and told him he was always to do as Mr. Grant wished, that he left him in his charge, and that he must behave to him like a son.

Davie was now making acquaintance with death — but it was not to him at all so dreadful as to some children, for he saw it through the face and words of the man to whom he looked up.

In the evening Donal went again to the home-farm and left once more alone in the drawing-room walked out into the old garden. There all the feelings came over him again which first led to his writing the poem that had done so much for him.

“Thank God,” he said to himself, “if my wife come here in any such sweet night as this, with such a low moon-crescent, and this thinking gentle wind, to wander about the garden, it will not be to remember that she is forgotten!”

He went up and down the grassy paths for a while, until once again, as before, joined by Miss Graeme.

“I couldn’t help thinking,” she said as she came up to him, “that I saw Lady Arctura walking by your side.— But I beg your pardon: how could I be so heartless!”

“Her name from you will always be pleasant to me,” returned Donal. “I was thinking of her—that was how you felt as if you saw her! You did not see anything, did you?”

“No; I wish I had.”

“She is nearer me than that,” said Donal. “She will be with me wherever I walk or rest; so I shall never be sad. God is with me, and I do not weep that I cannot see him: I wait; I wait.”

Miss Graeme was in tears.

“Mr. Grant,” she said, “you have sent a happy angel to heaven instead of a pining woman! God

bless you! You will let me think of you as a friend?"

"Always; always — : you loved her."

"I did not at first; I thought of her as a poor troubled creature! Now I think there was more life in her trouble than there was in my content. I soon came not only to love her, but to look up to her as a saint: if ever there was one, it was she, Mr. Grant. She often came here after I showed her that poem, and used to walk alone in the twilight. I think she was beginning to suspect you knew better about certain things than that dreadful Miss Carmichael. She was the plague of her life!"

"She was God's messenger — to buffet her, and make her know her need of him as he is, and not as man had taught her he was. Be sure, Miss Graeme, not one of us can do without him for nearest friend, for indwelling energy."

Here Mr. Graeme joined them.

"I do not think the earl will last many days," said Donal to him. "Don't you think it would be advisable at once upon his death to take possession of the house in the town? It is the only property that goes with the title now. Then of course you would at once make your abode in the Castle, for if he disputed the one, he would dispute the other as well. When the old man is gone, you will find in his papers proofs innumerable that his son has no claim. I will, if you like, have a deed of gift drawn up, but I would rather you seemed to come in by natural succession. We are not bound to tell the world everything; we are only bound to be able without shame to tell it everything. And then I shall have another favor

to ask of you : The house in town is of no great use to you ; let me have the use of it. I should like to live there and have a school. Davie will help me — for a while at least. We will not try hard to get pupils ; but when we do get one we will try to make a man of him. We will not try to make a great scholar, or a great anything of him, but a true man. We will try to help the whole man of him into the likeness of the one man — ”

Here Mr. Graeme interrupted him.

“ You will never make a living that way ! ” he said.

Donal opened his eyes, and looked at him. Like one convicted and ashamed : the eyes of the man of business fell before those of the man of God.

“ Ah,” said Donal, “ you have not an idea, Mr. Graeme, on how little I could live ! — Here, you had better take the will,” he said, holding it out to him.

His friend hesitated.

“ If you do not take it I will throw it in the fire : but you had better keep it for a time ; it might turn out useful.”

The next day the earl died.

Donal wrote to let his son know that he was dead. The next day he came ; he would know how things were. He met the new earl in the hall.

“ Mr. Graeme,” he said,—

“ Lord Morven, Mr. Graeme,” returned his lordship with coldness. The young fellow uttered a great oath, turned on his heel, and left them to bury his father without him. He had been no father ; why should his son be a son ?

The funeral over, Lord Morven squeezed Donal’s

hand, and looked him in the face : they understood each other ; from that moment they were almost like brothers. The earl seldom did anything of importance without consulting Donal, and Donal had the more influence both with landlord and with tenants that he had no *interest* in the property.

The same week he left the castle, and went into old Morven House. The people said Mr. Grant had played his cards well : had they known what he had really done, they would have called him a born idiot.

Davie, to whom no calamity could be overwhelming so long as he had Mr. Grant, went with him gladly, content to live with him till he should go to college. Donal took care to delay rather than hasten that hour, but when he went, did not go with him.

“ I have done what I can,” he said. “ It is time he began to walk alone.”

But he had no fear about him, and it was soon evident that the boy would never disgrace his teaching. There is no certainty as to how deep any teaching may have gone until a youth is left by himself and has to choose and refuse companions : the most promising youths are sometimes nothing but promisers.

They went to the house together, accompanied by Mrs. Brooks : her Donal, with the full approbation of Miss Graeme, had persuaded — easy persuasion where she seized on the suggestion with avidity — to keep house for him. Together they unlocked the door. The house, Mrs. Brooks said, was in an awful state : there was not much for the mason to do, but plenty for the carpenter : it had had nothing

done to it for generations: the best thing would be to go away for a while, and stay away till she told them it was ready for them.

Nothing could have suited Donal better. He went home again to his hills, taking Davie with him. He told his father and mother, Sir Gibbie and his lady, the things that had befallen him, and each approved heartily of what he had done — no less in refusing the property than in the rest. His mother took it more as a matter of course than any of the others, but all agreed that it should not be spoken of. When they returned to Auchars, Sir Gibbie and his wife went with them and staid for some weeks. Certain of the townfolk said he was a poor baronet that could not speak mortal word to a body: they never knew whether he spoke spiritual word or not.

Lord Morven and Miss Graeme had done their best to make the house what Donal would like. But in the castle they kept for him the rooms that Lady Arctura had called her own, and there he gathered together all the little personal possessions of his wife. The rooms were called his, and no one else entered them but Mrs. Brooks. To them he betook himself on holidays and always on a Sunday evening. What went on then I leave to the imagination of the reader who knows that alone one may meet many, sitting still may travel far, and silent make the universe hear. Lord Morven kept Larkie for Davie. The last I heard of Davie was that he was in India, a lieutenant, beloved of his men, and exercising a most beneficial influence on the regiment. The things he had learned he had so learned that they went spreading out from him, finding new ground

wherein to root and grow. In his day and generation he helped the coming of the kingdom of truth and righteousness : and that is to fulfil one's high calling.

It was some time before Donal had any pupils, and he never had many, being regarded as a man most peculiar, whose ideas about education were odd in the extreme. It was granted, however, that if a boy stayed, or rather if he allowed him to stay with him long enough, he was sure to turn him out a gentleman : that which was deeper than the gentleman, and was the life of him, people seldom saw or would have valued if they had seen. Most parents would like their children to have a chance of escaping eternal misery ; but as to becoming the sons and daughters of God, that is hardly worth their while !

But the few wise souls in the neighborhood know Donal as the heart of the place — the man to go to with any question of difficulty, in any trouble or dismay, for any advice or sympathy.

The intimacy between Miss Carmichael and the supposed Lord Fergue was broken off through his disgrace in the eyes of the world because of what he could not help, and then she grew less talkative and less obtrusive of her opinions. After some few years she condescended to marry a farmer on Lord Morven's estate. Their only child, proving a thoughtful boy, and that rare thing, a true reader, sought the company of the grave man with the sweet smile. He would go to his house to ask him about this and about that, reminding him much of Davie, and so becoming very dear to him. The mother discovering that, when every now and then he stole away, it was to go to the master's, as all called him, scolded and

forbade. But the prohibition brought such a time of tears and gloom and loss of appetite, that she was compelled to recall it, especially as her husband nowise shared her prejudices against the master, and the boy came and went as before. When he was taken ill, and lay on his death-bed, nobody could make him happy but the master; he almost nursed him through the last few days of his short earthly life. But the mother after that did not seem to love him any the better; she seemed rather to regard him as having deprived her of some of her property in the love of her boy.

So Donal lives a present power of heat and light in the place. Most of his early friends are gone, but he wears yet the same solemn look, with the same hovering smile. It seems to say to those who can read it, "I know in whom I have believed." And he in whom he believed more and more was that God who is the Father of the Lord. His life was hid with Christ in God, and he had no anxiety about anything. The wheels of the coming chariot, moving fast or slow to fetch him, were always moving; and whether it arrive at night, or at cock-crowing, or in the full blaze of noon, is all one to him. He is ready for the new life his Arctura knows. "God is," he will say, coming out of one of his talking moods; "God is, and all is well." When he has said that, he never says anything more, but listens only to those about him. He never disputes, rarely seeks to convince. "I will do what I can to let what light I have shine; but disputation is smoke, and serves only to obscure the light. It is to no profit — and I do like," he will say, "to give and to get the good of things!"





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