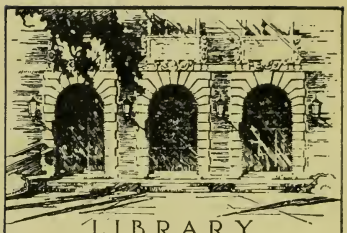

THE OCCUPATIONS

OF

A RETIRED LIFE.

VOL. II.

THE OCCUPATIONS

OF

A RETIRED LIFE.

A Novel.

By EDWARD GARRETT.

IN THREE VOLUMES.

VOL. II.

LONDON:
TINSLEY BROTHERS, 18, CATHERINE STREET, STRAND.
1868.

LONDON:
SAVILL, EDWARDS AND CO., PRINTERS, CHANDOS STREET,
COVENT GARDEN.

CONTENTS

OF

THE SECOND VOLUME.

THE OCCUPATIONS

OF

A RETIRED LIFE.

CHAPTER I.

ALICE UNDERTAKES NEW DUTIES.

Then, clad in snow, the New Year came upon Upper Mallowe.

But, however severe the weather, I always fancy when New Year comes winter goes. I said so to Ruth as we started for a walk one clear, cold morning towards the end of January.

"Though the fields be white with frost," I remarked, "there is a spring light hanging over them. I used to notice the same thing in the city."

"You had not much light of any sort there," said she.

"Oh yes, I had," I answered, "whenever the sun shone, one narrow ray slanted across my desk. That had to serve me in place of hills and meadows, and hedgerows; and it did its duty very well, for it kept them in my mind."

"Ah, what we miss and long for is not lost in the blankest sense of lost," said Ruth.

"No," I answered; "and I will say I have never seen more lovely country than what I saw in visions in that dusty counting-house. And there is a specially solemn grandeur in sunset over the city, if one manage to get a sky-view wider than a few inches."

"Ah, that's all good for the soul," answered my sister; "but nevertheless the body wants the genuine breezes."

"I don't think the poet had true poetry in him when he said

'God made the country, but man made the town,'"

I observed.

"One might as well say, 'Woman cuts the wood, but the fire boils the kettle,'" she answered.

"I will always stand up for London," I said, gallantly.

"That's honest," remarked Ruth; "you owe your fortune to it."

"It is the epitome of the whole world," I went on enthusiastically. "Some people will not own the analogies to be found in it, because they fear ridicule. For instance, folks laugh if one says that the bridge between the great warehouses in Carter Lane is a good suggestion of Venice."

"Well, you ought to conclude they are laughing at their own folly in not seeing it before," said Ruth.

Our destination was the Refuge. It was quite wonderful what a cheery place it looked. The inhabitants of the High Street

should have been vastly obliged to Alice for the change wrought by her industry and taste. All the tiny diamond window panes sparkled in the pale morning sun, and the ledges beneath, painfully white, were adorned with flourishing firs and laurels in bright red pots. We found Mr. M'Callum busy with these plants, and accordingly we lingered to admire their prosperous beauty.

"They're a' gifts," said he, "a' save ane, whilk root I picket up i' the road; the ithers are puir things frae the cottages near hand, whaur they were deein' for no being understood. 'Gie them to me,' said I, 'gie them to me, and i' the richt season I'll gie ye back a bonnie slip, and the plant itsel', gif it live, I'll sell for the benefit of the Refuge.' An' there wasna ane that said me nay. Sae in the summer, sir, they'll fetch us a bit siller, and their owners shall hae the slip, and naebody will be a penny the waur,

and the Refuge will be sae muckle the richer."

"Do the village people like the Refuge?" I inquired, for Mr. M'Callum had been its agent and collector among many of them.

"The maist o' them do," he answered; "if they haena kenned the grip of want themselves they ken somebody that has. But there were ane or twa said it was taxin' the industrious to feed the idle. And sae we talkit it over."

"There's a bit of reason in that doubt," said Ruth, thoughtfully, "and I never could be satisfied with the argument that, anyhow, almsgiving is a blessing to the giver. If we give alms for our own pleasure rather than to do good, it seems to me just a selfish indulgence."

"Na, na, I didna preachify; I sat me down and talkit it over. An' first I asked, 'Did ye never want help yoursel'?' And they fired up, and said they'd never been

evened wi' charity; if they wanted a little money, their master wad gie it in advance, or they had a brither in business i' the next toon, and sae forth. 'Saftly, saftly,' I said; 'suppose ye hadna a master, but just trampit the country, doing the hardest bits o' wark, which aye bring the least siller, wadna ye be glad o' a kindly hand that stood ye in stead of the master and the freends ye hadna got? Na, na,' said I, 'dinna set yerselves aboon a' the honest strivin' folk wha stand sae close to poortith's brink that the least joggle sets them over. When ye ask the master for an advance, ye wadna like if he said, 'I dinna need to gang a borrowing; why suld you?'" Ye'd make answer, "Master, ye're rich, ye dinna need ae pund, ye can get a hunder frae the bank."' And sae I say, 'Freends, ye're well to do; ye dinna ken the want o' a saxpence, because ye ken whaur to find a pund."

"And what did they say next?" I queried.

"Some paid down their shilling on that; but ane or twa—and ane I mind weel, for it was Miss Sanders, the dressmaker—stood out a bit langer. Said she, 'I'd gie anything to help a lass that would work, and couldna; ay, Mr. M'Callum, and I'd gie what I could to ony puir hizzie who wanted to leave her sin and live honestly, for God only kens what drives 'em to it,—the mair credit to such as win safely through a'; but,' said she, 'I wouldna gie a brass farthing to those idle sluts who might work, but will not. Don't tell me that anyhow they're miserable. Misery that could have been saved is nae recommendation—misery is nae a honest trade. It seems to me the world's owre-run wi' miserable people, and we that work are just the slaves to feed and keep them.' And there was a power of truth in the words as Miss Sanders

spoke them, for as a' the village knows it, I may tell you she has ae sister wha has just been a quiet curse to the haill family: a woman wi' no sense of 'sponsibility, wha seems to think her sister has a right to work for her, and she to gie na' 'tendance nor comfort in return. Miss Sanders canna keep baith her and a servant, and the idle hizzie taks the servant's keep wi'out the wark, and a' the while, gangs aboot the village sae disrespectable and shiftless, that there's some fules found to pity her."

"Whoever pities her should keep her," said Ruth.

"My heart was sair to see Miss Sanders's face," continued the old man; "it had sic a pitifu' overwarked luik; but I said, 'Aweel, mem, gif we're to stop every wark frae which idle loons pick guid they dinna deserve, we'd gie up everything. Na, na, we maun just do richt—better bear a cross than be a cross. But dinna ye say the idle

have the best o' this warld, leave alone that which is to come. What do they get? Naething you'd want. They may share the siller o' honest folk, but they havena the respeck. Wha seeks their word? wha cares for their praise? Will they hae nothing to answer for before His throne, who was constant at His Father's business? Ah, Miss Sanders,' I said, 'I dinna think there's a many such among our puir refugees. We've mair of their victims—folk who've been so disheartened strugglin' wi' sic-like that they've thrawn aside everything to get awa'!' And then the tears streamed down her face, and she said, 'I'm thinking a' the evil i' the warld dates frae the idle people;' but she put half-a-crown into my hand."

"Are the two sisters alone?" I asked.

"They are the noo," he answered. "They're folk frae London. They're distant kith o' that unhappy callant George

Roper. I think I've heard that he was brocht up in their father's house. The puir leddy still believes her cousin met his death at Ewen's han', but she aye says she doesna judge folk by their kin; and weel I ken the schule whaur she learned that lesson."

"Miss Sanders shall have my dress-making," remarked Ruth, in an under-tone.

"And so George Wilmot is still with you, Mr. M'Callum," I said, as we adjourned from the garden to the house, where Alice eagerly welcomed my sister.

"Ay, sir, and like to stay," returned the old man. "He's a decent laddie, too; and frae sweepin' up the snaw, and sich like, he gaes regular to wark at ane o' the farms. But he canna pay baith his boord and lodging too, and sae he still has the empty room, waiting your pleasure, sir."

"He is quite welcome to it," I answered.

"Indeed, when the Refuge funds increase, it will be no bad plan to build two or three small chambers over the great supper-room, so as to enable us to offer such orphans a safe home until they become entirely independent. It strikes me that too little has been done in that way. What is to become of children like him, who are willing to earn what they can, but cannot possibly earn enough? Why should they find no guardian but the gaoler?"

"Well, it's wrong," said Ruth; "nobody denies that. But setting the wrong right is your business as much as anybody's."

"It would make extra work for Alice," I remarked, glancing at my late servant.

"It would be all in the day's labour," answered the girl, smiling; "and perhaps there would be a female orphan who could help me."

"Alice likes it," put in her grandfather:

"she's been twice as bricht since Geordie came."

"I like to have somebody to look after, you see, ma'am," said Alice to my sister; "and I like to have him coming in and out to his meals as Ewen used to do."

"An' we set him crackin' aboot London," remarked Mr. M'Callum; "but it's little eno' he can tell, puir laddie; but here he comes to speak for himsel'."

When George Wilmot saw my sister and I, he took off his cap and gave his head a peculiar wag, intended as a bow. His appearance was considerably improved, for though he wore the same clothes in which he arrived at the Refuge, they were now well mended and clean, and his face, though coarse in feature, was not ill-favoured, and his big, simple, blue eyes appealed to one like a baby's.

"Well, George," I said, "how are you? I am glad to hear you are doing so well."

Whereupon he hung his head, and appeared thoroughly ashamed of himself.

"Do you like the country?" I asked—"do you like it better than London?"

He made a reflective pause, and then looked up, and said, piteously, "I dunno yet."

"Where did you live in London?" asked Ruth.

"Down by Ratcliff Highway," he replied, "sometimes in one court and sometimes in another."

"And can't you be sure whether you like this pretty village better than Ratcliff Highway?" I queried.

"I was used to it," he said, simply.

"And he had his mother there, sir," said Alice, softly, laying her hand on the boy's shoulder, while he moved a little closer to her.

"And you never went to school?" I inquired.

"No, sir, mother teached me to read of nights."

"Did you go to church?" I asked.

"Sometimes, in the evenings," he answered.

"Did you ever see St. Paul's?"

"D'ye mean the big church in the square?" he queried.

"Yes—the cathedral."

"I only seed it once to notice—that was in the half-dark, when the stars were out. I'd been kept late at a ware'us in Shoe Lane, and mother comed and waited for me in the square, and then she telled me to look at the church, 'cause it wor St. somethin' or 'nother, where the fine people went o' Sundays."

"Well, at any rate, you know the Thames?" I observed.

"I guess I do," he answered, grinning; "that's fine bathing!"

"I suppose you had plenty of friends to

keep you company in such amusements," said Ruth.

"There were lots o' boys, but I didn't know 'em, 'cept jest to speak to on the minute," he replied. "Only little Jem Norris—poor little chap."

"What happened to him?" I asked.

"He went a-bathing and got too far out, and a barge knocked him on the head," he answered.

"Dear, dear!" said Alice; "weren't you afraid of the same thing?"

"I took my chance—it's like everything else," he replied, philosophically.

"Ay, ay," said Mr. M'Callum; "it's little we'd do, if we did nought by which anither had met his death. To dee is na evil at 'a—but to live fearing death is a sair thing."

George Wilmot raised his blue eyes to the old man's face. I wondered how much he really understood of the patriarch's

saintly cheerfulness, or if it only made a pleasant echo in his soul, like a sweet song in an unknown tongue.

"Alice," said Ruth, presently, "will you put on your bonnet, and come with us, to show me Miss Sanders's house?"

For my sister no sooner sees a way to do good than she does it. She is quick in everything, just as I am slow. But it is never too late to learn. So I took the hint of her example, and made a note in my pocket-book respecting the new orphan-rooms for the Refuge.

George Wilmot ran before us and opened the gate, blushing at his own politeness. As we passed out, I took the opportunity of slipping into his hand a little silver something which left him a very happy boy indeed. He has no grandfather to give him a tip, and I have no grandson to receive one, so we exactly suit each other.

"Poor lad, his mind sadly wants opening," I remarked, as we walked away with Alice in attendance.

"I don't know, sir," said Alice, in her thoughtful, unobtrusive way. "He's ignorant of some things, but he knows others better than many wiser people."

"I daresay he could pick up a living where you'd starve, Edward," suggested Ruth; "and because that is not an accomplishment taught in schools, who shall say it is inferior thereto?"

"And he knows how to be patient in cold and hunger," added Alice; "he has gone through dreadful times, and don't think anything of them!"

"I fear he has just endured like a poor animal, without any sense of submission to God's will," I remarked.

"Better endure like an innocent dog than rebel like a wicked man," said Ruth. "If we know right without doing it, we're so

much the worse,—if we do right without knowing it, perhaps we're so much the better!"

"I am glad you like the boy, Alice," I said, "for it is not everybody who could see anything loveable in him."

"At first I only pitied him for being so left to himself, sir," she rejoined; "and I pitied him the more because he did not know he was pitiful."

"Did he soon make himself at home?" I inquired.

She shook her head. "At first he was very shy," she said; "just like a wild thing who fancies you mean mischief when you offer to feed it; but after a day or two he grew ill, and no wonder, for how he lived on his way from London I can't tell!"

"The God who watches the sparrows can," said Ruth.

"And during that illness, he took to me," Alice went on: "at least, then I took to

him, for I was touched by his patience, which made it quite hard to find out what ailed him. I was afraid he was to have a bad fever, but it turned out only cold and weakness, and he was about again when Ewen came home on Christmas-day. And from the very first minute, he wasn't a bit shy with Ewen; wasn't that strange?"

"I daresay you've liked him all the better for that," observed Ruth.

"Your brother must carry a charm against shyness," I remarked, "for you remember I took great liberties with him in our first interview."

Alice laughed gaily. "I asked George about it afterwards," she said, "and he told me it was because Ewen did not 'scorn' him. Now I am sure neither grandfather nor I ever did so," she added.

"Nor do we," said Ruth; "but I know some people have a happy gift of setting every one, whether superior or inferior, on

a comfortable human equality, and that without any forfeiture of respect or self-respect."

"I believe it is the temperament of genius," I remarked.

"I think Ewen is a genius, sir," said Alice, proudly, "but he would only be angry if he heard me say so."

"In what way has he shown it?" I inquired. "I remember he told me he had a taste for drawing."

"He has sketched half the country-side," she answered, in the trembling voice of suppressed eagerness. "I've got the pictures at home—they're not well-finished, but somehow they make me see more in the fields and sky than I ever saw before, sir."

"The true end of art," said Ruth.

"And he brought a little beauty from London," Alice went on; "he'd drawn it in coloured chalks,—an old broken boat

lying on a wharf in the moonlight. And Georgie was so struck with it—for it was like a bit of home to him—that Ewen let him put it up in his bedroom."

"Dear me," I said; "I should not have thought George had eyes for a picture."

Alice laughed again, and Ruth said, "I daresay George is like many other people—never so stupid as when he tries to put on his best manners."

"Some day, Alice, when you have time, you must bring Ewen's pictures to show us," I observed.

"Thank you, sir," she answered.

In a minute or two she pointed out Miss Sanders's house. It was a small lodge-like place, with a tiny window at either side of the door, which bore a plate announcing the owner's occupation. Then Ruth thanked her, and dismissed her to her duties at the Refuge.

We did not call upon Miss Sanders then,

not intending so to do until Ruth took her some work wherewith to make a pleasant introduction. We went home to our early dinner, which we beguiled by chatting over all we had heard and seen during the morning.

"Ruth," I said, "the new orphan rooms shall be added to the Refuge as soon as the weather is mild enough for such operations. When I ask the builder for an estimate of the repairs needed at St. Cross, I will also mention this matter to him."

"That is right," she answered. Presently she added, in a clear, brave voice, "Edward, we are old people. Death *may* come suddenly to the young, but it *must* come soon to us. Let us not delay to make some future provision for the good works we are trying to do, and let us seriously reflect what will be the wisest conditions whereby to retain such provision for the objects we intend."

There was a solemn silence. Then I said, "I shall certainly provide that these orphan rooms be maintained expressly for orphans who are too old to enter any school, yet not old enough to stand quite alone in the world. There is not a more forlorn class as I said this morning——"

"And you need not say it again," she interrupted, "but just write it down on paper and get a lawyer to witness it."

CHAPTER II.

A MODERN MARTYR.

WITHIN a fortnight after our visit to the Refuge, Ruth found some dressmaking to take to Miss Sanders. I wished her to go on this feminine expedition alone, but she persisted in requiring my company. We meant to go in the morning, but something prevented our departure till the afternoon.

We soon found the place which Alice had pointed out to us, and we went up to the door and knocked. Ruth always gives a good hearty knock, and in this case it seemed to shake the whole building. It was a poor shallow little sham of a house,—alas, if it were a type of the home!

Our rap was not quickly answered. I fancied I heard sounds of shouting and scuffling within. But presently the door was opened by a neat, pretty-looking, faded woman, with a painfully flushed face, who indicated the way to the parlour, rather than invited us to enter. No sooner were we seated, than we heard sounds of unchecked sobs and groans proceeding from the inner apartment. Our hostess suddenly turned from us and leaned on the mantelpiece, but as suddenly recovered herself, and with a dim smile inquired our business.

"But, surely, some one is ill," I remarked; "do not let us keep you from them; we can wait."

"Nobody is ill, sir," she answered, with a firmness almost severe. "There is no need that I should detain you."

I noticed that during these remarks the sounds ceased, though they were redoubled while Ruth unfolded her materials, and

issued instructions. Miss Sanders went through her part bravely, only in her face there was a little deepening of pain-lines already deep enough.

"Is that unfortunate person a lunatic?" Ruth inquired at last, in that kind of whisper which is awfully audible.

Miss Sanders threw up her hands with a disclaiming gesture, and then spread out her fashion-book.

"Yes, I'm mad—I'm driven mad!" screamed a voice from the other room; "but there's One above knows—He knows all the sufferings of those who never complain!"

"What is it, my dear lady?" I inquired of the trembling woman before us. "You must have heard of us in the village. Will you put no trust in us?"

Her lips quivered a little, and she wrung her thin fingers. "You know I have not said a word, sir," she exclaimed. "I wished

to keep it all to ourselves. God save me from my sister!" and she burst into tears.

The door between the rooms opened, and a woman entered. I recognised her as a worshipper at St. Cross's, and I concluded we saw Anne Sanders. She was a dark, sallow woman, with a bony face—one of those countenances which seem to betray a heart too hard to be easily worn out. Though it was nearly five o'clock, she wore a dirty ragged morning gown. She rushed to her sister, and seized her arm. "What have I done? what have I done?" she shrieked frantically. "Ah, Bessie, it drives me mad to find you thus set against me. It so cuts into my heart that I am sure my last dying word will be your name!"

"The dying often remember those whom they have cruelly injured," said Ruth, quietly.

Anne Sanders dropped in a heap upon the floor, emitting incoherent ejaculations. Bessie stood aside, silent and agitated. She suffered under the degradation in which the other evidently gloried. Presently, finding herself unnoticed, Anne again sprang up and attacked her sister. "What have I done? what have I done?—tell me—tell them!" she screamed.

"If God and your own conscience do not answer, how can I?" said Bessie. "And if you don't respect yourself, or me, at least respect the presence of strangers."

"No, no," she cried. "I will not be silent—I want justice—I appeal for justice to God—the Father of the helpless orphan!"

"Orphanhood is not very touching at forty," said Ruth, drily. "By your own account, Miss Anne Sanders, you are an ill-used woman. Then why don't you

leave your sister?—the world is all before you."

"Oh, I wish she would," moaned Bessie.

"Where am I to go? What am I to do?" said Anne. "Nobody wants me. I'm not fit for anything."

"Then, as you are useless, why should your sister be taxed with you, since there is no love between you?" questioned Ruth.

"Why should there be no love between us?" groaned Anne. "Whatever I've done —I don't know what it is—but whatever I've done, oughtn't she to forgive——"

"Oh, Anne, Anne," sighed Bessie; "haven't I forgiven? But you won't change, and you wont go away, and you stay in the house, and make me wicked—and it is so hard to forgive that!"

"You've got nothing to forgive," screamed Anne, changing her tactics. "I work as hard as you, for all I don't earn anything.

Don't I drudge about at the hard, nasty housework while you sit in the parlour and make your dresses and get money?"

"Depend upon it, Miss Bessie will be very glad if you will do the same," remarked Ruth.

"But every one can't do the same thing," insisted Anne; "there's different work for different people, and there's some doomed to be drudges all their days. Oh—oh—oh!"

"No work is drudgery except to an unwilling worker," said Ruth, promptly; "and therefore I would not keep a drudge about me for any consideration; and it is very hard that your sister should be compelled so to do."

"What began the—ahem—the difference—this afternoon?" I asked.

"I was angry—very angry—with Anne, because, although it was late, she was too dirty to answer the door if any one came," exclaimed Bessie.

"And she called me an idle slut," sobbed Anne.

"So I did," said Bessie, wearily. "God forgive me! but at times I am so tried I scarcely know what I say, and that's why I wish she would go away."

"No epithet stings like a true one!" observed Ruth.

"She can say nothing against me except these little trifles," said Anne, passionately. 'Yesterday there was a fuss because her candles weren't ready to a minute."

"She knew I was so busy," sighed Bessie; "and I didn't ask for them till I couldn't see to thread my needles. And it's always the same."

"She might have put them up herself," shouted Anne. "It would have wasted no more time than scolding me."

"But you remember—there is different work for different people," repeated Ruth; "and the world would run into fine confusion

if each left his own line of duty to take up another's."

"Every one takes part against me," said Anne, again dropping on the floor. "I've never had a friend all my life."

"Not a nice confession," remarked Ruth.

"But I hope I shall soon be taken away," she moaned, "and then I shan't be a nuisance to any one, or a burden to myself. I can find comfort in that. There's hope for me in my religion. I've kept hold of my religion through all. I've never given up my church, though no one will go with me, and I've found peace there, and so——"

"Silence, Anne," said Bessie, springing up and speaking with terrible fervour. "Your profession of religion has made religion a scoff and a byeword to those who knew your useless, selfish life. Who said that if pious people were like you, he would rather try the bad ones? Who was first

weaned from going to church, because he was shamed and angered by your slovenly clothes, and repellent manners? Is that the religion which enjoins whatever is lovely and of good report? The blood of George Roper, body and soul, rests upon your head!"

There was an awful solemnity in her sister's sudden outburst, which cowed the miserable woman sitting on the floor. But presently she spoke again, in a whining tone:

"I'm blamed for being idle and useless, I'm treated like a blank, and yet I'm accused of having power to do evil. How can I do harm if I'm a blank?"

"Now that puts me out of all patience!" said Ruth, quite warmly, "how can one argue with a person who asks such a question? Does not one dumb note spoil a tune, and one dead flower poison a nosegay? Is not every child taught that idle hands

are Satan's instruments to work out his wicked will?"

"Every one is against me," wailed Anne Sanders again, finding no answer to parry these home thrusts. "Nobody takes my part. I am forlorn and forsaken here; but at least I can remember WHO said, 'Blessed are they which are persecuted; for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.'"

"Don't pervert Scripture," said my sister —"'Blessed are they which are persecuted *for righteousness' sake,*'—not blessed are they who are called to account and chidden for their own wrong-doing."

And then Anne Sanders sprang up, saying incoherently that she should go to her own room, and pour out her heart where she had never failed to find comfort. And so she rushed away, leaving Ruth and me, and Bessie Sanders, blankly gazing at each other.

"I am so sorry," said the latter, gently.

"You should never have known this, if I could have helped it. It has happened that you should learn more in an hour than other neighbours among whom we have lived for years."

"Depend upon it, all has happened for the best," remarked Ruth.

"I am so afraid that I am in the wrong," continued Miss Sanders, as if she feared she might gain more sympathy than she deserved. "I had such a dear, good sister once, that perhaps I expect too much from Anne. And I am very sharp-tempered."

"So are all overworked people," rejoined Ruth; "of course they shouldn't be, but they can't help it, that's all."

"But the worst is that I can't love Anne," said Miss Bessie, sadly, "and when I remember that we should love our enemies, and forgive them as we look to be forgiven, then a great cloud of despair comes over me."

"Nonsense," exclaimed Ruth, "what do you call forgiveness? Fine talk and selfish actions? If it be not forgiveness to give another house-room and maintenance while she neglects and torments you, what is forgiveness, I wonder!"

Miss Bessie smiled dimly, as though she gathered a little comfort from this healthy and unsentimental view of the matter. "From her earliest childhood, Anne always thought herself an injured being," she said.

"Then her best blessing would have been real misery," returned Ruth; "it would have taught her to know the genuine article."

"Oh, ma'am, she may be more really unhappy than you think," said Bessie, earnestly. "You cannot judge from this afternoon. I fear I am too fidgety."

"I saw her dirty, ragged gown," remarked Ruth, grimly, "a disgrace to a

common lodging-house servant. Besides, she is confident she is a martyr, and you abase yourself as a sinner. That throws a great light on the matter!"

"So you had another sister once, Miss Sanders?" I questioned, anxious to soften that poor pained face with sweeter recollections.

"Yes, a dear little sister, years younger than Anne," said Miss Bessie, going to the mantelpiece and taking therefrom a little miniature in an ebony case. "That is all I have of Katie. The picture is pretty, but not half like her, she was so sweet! And she was something like her poor cousin George—the portrait reminds me of both. If things had gone right, I think those two would have married. How different it would have been!"

"But George went wrong?" I queried.

"Yes, George went wrong," answered Miss Bessie; "and that is the misery of it!

When he was a lad of seventeen or eighteen, we all lived together in London, and mother and I carried on the business, and the housekeeping was left to Anne. George found everything unpleasing and unpunctual, and when he grew cross, Anne talked piously to him," (Ruth groaned,) "and of course that made matters much worse. Then he did not like going to church with her, because she never would get her winter clothes ready till after Christmas, nor her summer ones till the dog-days, and when his fellow-clerks met him with her it vexed him, and she was stiff and snappy to them besides. So he dropped going to church, and went about instead, and made friends that didn't go either, and bad habits grew where the good ones had fallen off, and mother, who was a rigid woman in her way —rigid people never punish the right ones —forbade him our house, and then he went to the bad altogether. And Katie was

never herself after, and she died when she was one-and-twenty."

"But have I not heard that Mr. Roper was one of your household at the time he met his death?" I asked.

"Yes," she answered. "When mother died, some time after Katie, George heard of her death, and came to the funeral. He seemed very miserable; so, when I sold our London business, and bought a smaller one here, I got him to come with us, just for Katie's sake. I had more time then than before, and I managed to keep Anne out of his way. He got a situation in Mallowe, but he never settled in this house, only came here now and then, though I think he called it his home. He kept his lively, kindly manners to the last, and that was all, for he made many parents rue the day when we came to the village. He was coming to see me that summer afternoon when—you know, sir?"

"When his mysterious death brought a blight on young Ewen M'Callum," I said.

Miss Sanders would make no further remark upon that subject. So I took up the little ebony-framed portrait, and tried to fancy what this cousin George had been. The pictured face was soft and girlish—a boy resembling it must have had a touching look of frank innocence. And yet it had ended in a debasing life, spreading pollution round it, and closed by a shameful death, only to be named in whispers. Oh, what wonderful strength and wisdom and love must dwell in Him who has patience with a world where such things happen.

"And is this struggle between you and your sister to go on for ever?" queried Ruth, presently.

"I suppose so," answered Miss Sanders, hopelessly.

"I could not endure it," said Ruth, with animation.

"I must," replied the other. And as the shadows of twilight settled in the little room, the faded, lined countenance shone out of their gloom, a heroic, enduring face, strong enough for aught which life might make its duty. No demonstrative woman was this, she might have come and gone about her work for years, and yet have made no sign. She had evidently only spoken so freely to Mr. M'Callum, because she deemed her secret safer than it really was, and did not think her words could be understood as the involuntary cry of her own pain. Surely all her life would not be lived out in the chilling shadow of this unreasonable and worthless relative! But should relief come—ay, to-morrow — it could not undo the past—there were scars on her soul which could never be healed on earth. Perhaps such scars shine as honours in heaven.

We said no more about her shivered

household happiness, and after a little ordinary conversation, we left her. She came with us to the garden-gate, and stood there till we were nearly out of sight. Then she went back into the house, and we heard the door close behind her. Are there no torment chambers not underground? There was a fearful torture common in old times, when a putrid body was fastened to a living man. What would it be to drag through life with such a burden? But is it better to be linked with a diseased soul?

"Now, Ruth," I said, as we walked along, "suppose a man married a woman like Anne Sanders, what is he to do with her?"

"He need not marry such a one," she answered, "unless he feels that he cannot get any one better!"

"But suppose he married under a mistake," I pleaded.

"When one makes a bargain which turns

out badly, one has to abide by it," she said.

"But what comfort in life could he have?" I asked.

"Nobody's fault but his own?" said my sister.

"But don't you think this stolid irresponsibility in the woman may explain some of our wretched wife-beating cases?" I queried.

"Probably it may," said Ruth. "When a man marries a brainless animal, he is likely to degenerate into a wild beast. Men are generally good or bad according to the women with whom they associate."

O my terrible sister!

"But is it not strange," I began presently, taking another subject, "that there are people in the world so ignorant as not to understand that a religious profession, unsupported by practice, is worse than nothing? Anne Sanders consoles herself by

the very principles and precepts in which she should see her own condemnation. I wonder how she reads the last chapter of Proverbs!"

"She has her own version of it," said Ruth. "Do you suppose the Bible sounds the same to every one?"

"Certainly not," I answered; "but the variety ought to be, that it should seem to each full of special warnings against his own besetting sin."

"That is how it should be," replied my sister; "but this is how it is: the lessons we most need stand as blanks in our Bibles, till God opens our eyes to see them just a little. The greatest saint does not know God's word as he will know it hereafter."

"I suppose Anne Sanders heard Mr. Marten's sermon when the Refuge was opened," I remarked.

"Of course she did," said Ruth, "and

depend upon it she sat and glorified herself that she was not as other people."

"Do you really think she would not apply a single word to herself?" I queried.

"Certainly she wouldn't," answered my sister; "she would apply it to Bessie instead."

"But if such truths were repeated to her individually, don't you think she would see their application to her own case?" I inquired.

"She would then see that *you* meant to apply them to her," replied Ruth, "and she would take it as a proof of your malice and envy."

"Then what means can be taken to convince such people of their error and danger?" I exclaimed.

"I don't know," said Ruth, "but I believe the grace of God is much nearer to the double-dyed murderer on the scaffold than to the respectable self-deceived hypocrite."

"But we must not be uncharitable in our thoughts of any, Ruth," I suggested.

"I daresay some worthy souls in Jerusalem thought Christ himself uncharitable when he called the Pharisees vipers, serpents, and whited sepulchres," answered Ruth. "Remember, He had counsel for the fallen woman, and pardon for the dying thief, yet nothing but anger for those whose lives he summed up in the awful words,—'Ye shut up the kingdom of heaven against men: for ye neither go in yourselves, neither suffer ye them that are entering to go in.'"

"Yet these people form part of the world for which He died," I said.

"So they do," she responded, heartily, "and therefore, we must leave them in His hands. Otherwise I should sometimes be inclined to think the bees set us a good example when they kill off their drones once a year."

"But all Pharisees and hypocrites are not drones," I ventured to hint.

"Not with their tongues," said Ruth, significantly. "'Whatsoever they bid you observe and do, that observe and do: but do ye not after their works: for they say and do not.' Such people are like a copy of the Scriptures, on whose margin an infidel has drawn unclean and blasphemous pictures, which pervert the holy words and pollute the reader's mind."

So we both returned home, and found our fire brightly stirred and reflected in our shining teapot, while Phillis stood in cheerful active attendance. But all the evening, as I basked in the blessings God gave me, I wondered what would have become of me had my sister, Ruth Garrett, been such a one as Anne Sanders; and as I contrasted myself with Miss Bessie toiling in her neglected home, I

hoped that God does somehow make up for those strange differences in lot which no human wisdom can understand or prevent.

CHAPTER III.

WHO ARE "WE"?

Ruth kept up our acquaintance with Miss Bessie Sanders. I noticed that my sister required a great deal of work done in our own house, which took the quiet dressmaker out of her miserable, haunted abode. And in the course of a few weeks the silent woman appeared to take heart. Her reserved nature had never sought sympathy, but when it came, she found it good. Ruth's sympathy was of that sensible sort which proud people like. Anne was never named. Only Bessie was constantly treated with tenderness and respect by every member of our household.

And so spring brightened round our home,

and with the crocuses and snowdrops, certain strange gentlemen came to Upper Mallowe, and hovered about St. Cross, and roused the curiosity of the village by their note-books and measuring rods. Rumours began to fly about that the church would soon be closed for repairs; and in due time Mr. Marten announced from the communion rails that donations for that purpose would be thankfully received by himself, or by Mr. Edward Garrett.

In the course of the following week we were startled by a visit from Mr. Herbert and Agnes. It was the farmer's first appearance in our house, and he had never been formally introduced to Ruth, though he and she had exchanged greetings when the two households met on the way to worship. He was not at all a visiting man. He was quite at ease among the bluff, feudal hospitalities of his great farm, with its honest oak floors and substantial furniture,

which did not tremble beneath his huge weight and unceremonious movements, but he had a respectful deference for his neighbours' carpets and chairs, which caused him to sit painfully and to tread gingerly in any house but his own. Agnes excused the long time between her visits, by the plea of severe colds and general ill-health, and I noticed that, though the weather was unusually bright and warm for the season, she still wore a long fur-trimmed mantle and a woollen veil, and held her wraps about her like one who feels chilly. She looked very fragile and shadowy—reminding me of some early flowers in our garden, which blossomed on a prematurely sunny day, and then shivered and shrank in the pitiless rains which followed. Yet she talked more than before, the aim of her words being to lead the conversation to such subjects as her uncle would like to take up. Her whole manner towards him was particularly atten-

tive and dutiful—something like the over-anxious service of a truly loyal subject, who yet has involuntary doubts about the perfect wisdom of some of his sovereign's ways. Yet this very deference seemed to perplex and trouble Mr. Herbert.

"The object of my visit," the worthy farmer presently explained (he could not understand a visit without one), "is to pay in my subscription for the church repairs. I can't do more at present, but I may before it's all over." So saying he put a folded note upon the table. I expected it would be for five pounds, or perhaps ten; but even my sanguine nature was agreeably startled to find it was for fifty."

"But really, Mr. Herbert," I said, "when you intended such liberality as this, you should have taken it to the rector himself."

Our guest laughed and shook his head. "I honour the rector, sir," he answered;

"though it do come rather hard when one's 'pastors and masters' are twenty years younger than oneself. I like the rector in the pulpit, and, as he is the rector, I would rather not differ from him out of it, and so I don't go near him, sir."

"But why should you like Mr. Marten in the pulpit, and yet differ from him out of it, sir?" asked Ruth.

Mr. Herbert laughed his hearty, rollicking laugh, and again shook his head with the knowing air of a man who can explain more than he chooses. "Mr. Marten is pastor at St. Cross," he said, "and I am master at the Great Farm, and we've each a right to do as we please with our own, and we are best not to interfere with each other. I don't reckon he has done justice to St. Cross—till lately; and he don't reckon I act fairly with my concerns. Neither of us has ever given our opinion straight out, but I guess we each know what the

other thinks. And so I keep out of his way."

"I believe Mr. Marten is a truly excellent man, and always anxious to do his duty as his conscience tells him," I remarked.

"According to my mind, that's dangerous doctrine, sir," replied Mr. Herbert. "Is not our conscience too likely to bid us do just what we wish?"

"I don't think so," I answered; "I think we can generally distinguish between our conscience and our will."

"I think it's best to put all that on one side," said the farmer, "and just take a sound standard of duty, and resolutely stretch ourselves up to it, even if we crack our hearts in the process."

"But by your rule, how are we to select a sound standard?" I queried. "May not our wills engage in the choice, and the harsh man indulge himself in the belief

he aims at justice, and the mild man forget justice, in the imaginary pursuit of mercy?"

"Oh, my ideas don't take such high flights as that," rejoined Mr. Herbert; "I just follow up two or three good old precepts, that keep the world in the right place, and have no twistings and turnings."

"But everything must turn out of its way sometimes, or else crush something beneath it," said Ruth.

"Yes, indeed!" exclaimed Agnes.

Her uncle turned and glanced at her. The niece rose from her chair, and picked up his gloves, which had fallen to the floor. It seemed as if the animated ejaculation must have come from somebody else, she appeared so utterly submissive. When an over-hasty driver hears a child's cry from beneath his chariot-wheels, how does he look? Like Mr. Herbert looked then, I fancy.

After a little desultory conversation, our visitors rose to go, and then, availing ourselves of her uncle's presence, we claimed Agnes's company for the day. Mr. Herbert immediately granted the petition, and the girl yielded as if she had no voice in the matter. Yet there was no scornful apathy about Agnes Herbert. One felt no repulsion—only pity. I have heard that some, who have passed through terrible physical ordeals, have henceforth found the world somewhat like a padded and darkened room, wherein all sounds were muffled and all sights misty.. Would you be angry if you had to speak twice before such a one heeded you? I don't think so.

When her uncle was gone, and her bonnet and mantle put aside, Agnes returned to the parlour, and professed interest in some plain woollen knitting with which Ruth was busy. "Such nice work, for it can be done quite mechanically," she said.

"Nice work for an old woman whose eyes are not as good as they were," rejoined my sister, "but rather dull work for a young lady, who should have pretty patterns and plans of her own."

"Ah, yes; but I lose myself in a pattern," said Agnes, smiling.

"But practice makes perfect, my dear," observed Ruth.

"I have had plenty of practice," replied Miss Herbert. "See! I did that in London,"—and she displayed a tiny pocket-handkerchief with an elaborate embroidered device in one corner.

My sister admired it exceedingly, and inquired if she had worked any more.

"O yes," she answered, "I did a great many, but I have only that one."

"Have you worn them out?" asked Ruth, surprised. "Surely you don't use such things for every-day wear?"

"No," replied Miss Herbert, "but I only kept this one, and I seldom use it."

"Why don't you embroider some more?" inquired my sister.

She shook her head. "I could not do it now," she answered, a little sadly. "I should only spoil the muslin."

"Did you leave all your talents in London, Miss Herbert?" I asked.

She laughed. "Perhaps I did, sir," she said.

"Do you remember your mother, my dear?" queried Ruth, presently.

"No," she answered; "and there is no portrait of her. And yet I fancy I know what she was like,"—this very softly.

"As your name is the same as your uncle's, I presume you are his niece by your father's side?" remarked my sister.

"Yes," replied Agnes, adding presently, "but my father was not at all like my uncle. Not like him in any way. I have heard

he resembled my grandmother's brother, Richard Carewe."

"Family likenesses often descend in that cross fashion," I observed.

"And family characters too," said Agnes, with a shoot of that animation which occasionally illuminated her languor.

"We knew something of the Carewes, when we were young," said Ruth, "and I hope your father did not resemble your great-uncle in his fate?"

"Not exactly, but he was never what the world calls respectable or good," answered Agnes, with a hard, satiric touch in her voice.

"What does his daughter say?" asked Ruth, gently.

"That he was an angel in a strange disguise," she said fervently, adding sorrowfully, "but that is only my opinion, and, of course, I loved him."

"Depend upon it, my dear," said Ruth,

"the opinion of those who love is most like God's verdict."

Agnes looked up with great pathetic eyes. "My poor father often laughed about religious people," she said, "but he would have liked you."

"Would he?" queried my sister, with just a little quaver in her cheerful voice.

"Yes," said Agnes, quietly, "he fancied religious people were selfish, and narrow, and even cruel; those whom he had known were so, you see."

"Then it was not religion he laughed at, but only its counterfeit," rejoined Ruth; "still that was wrong, for it should have given him pain rather than amusement."

"It gave him pain enough," answered Agnes, "bitter pain! But it was always his way to laugh when he suffered. Oh, now, surely he knows all about it, and suffers no more!"

"God loves him far better than you can,

little one," said my sister. "God knows everything, and takes all circumstances into consideration. Circumstances don't make a man good or bad, but they try him, and God knows exactly the severity of the trial, and that those who seem much better than he, might have been far worse had they lived the same life."

There followed a silence, which at last I broke by asking where Miss Herbert had lived when in London.

"Oh, in many places," she replied, with a little hesitation; "we lived in any neighbourhood which suited my father for the time being—in Bloomsbury while he went to the British Museum Reading Room, once on Tower Hill, often in Soho."

"And you were the housekeeper," queried Ruth.

"Yes, but there is not much housekeeping needed for two people in lodgings," Agnes answered, laughing.

"How did you amuse yourself?" I asked.

"Oh, I had plenty to do," she replied, bending over Ruth's knitting—"my embroidery and a little drawing, and so forth. Sometimes I could help papa with his manuscripts."

"For what did your father write?" I asked.

Agnes coloured, and explained rapidly. "My poor father was unfortunate from the beginning. You see, his family disowned him, because he refused to be a clergyman; it being a custom with the Herberts that the eldest son should be bred for the farm, and the second for the church. Therefore, when he went to London, he was so badly off he was glad to work for any one who would employ him. He often used to say he got into a bad style of literature: and what was worse, he made a name in that style, and that cost him all chances of advancement." And after this

apologetic preamble, she added, humbly, "He wrote long stories for the common penny papers. I daresay you scarcely know what I mean, for such journals only go into kitchens."

"None the worse, for that matter," said Ruth, promptly. "I've seen thirty-shilling novels that should only go into kitchen fires."

"No, I don't think my father cared for that alone," continued Agnes, thoughtfully; "only he had to write in a particular way for these papers—to cram each story with twenty hair-breadth adventures, to make his people talk as real people never do, and each like—I scarcely know how to express myself—but every character like one great capital letter, instead of a long word made up of many vowels and consonants, each modifying the other."

"All the devils very black, and all the angels very bright!" said Ruth.

"Yes, exactly so," rejoined Agnes, accepting my sister's shrewd definition. "How often he used to say that if he had known the end from the beginning, he would rather have swept a crossing than have rushed into literature merely to earn a piece of bread!"

"And was he ever able to break these miserable trammels?" I inquired.

"Never—until—until just before his death," she answered, with a breaking voice; "and then a beautiful little simple tale of his came out in a first-class magazine. The number containing it was brought to him the day he died; and he read his own story, word for word, and smiled as if it pleased him." And here she broke down, very quietly.

"Did he say anything?" Ruth asked, presently.

"He put the magazine into my hands," she replied, raising her tearful face, "and

he said, 'Agnes, that is the only legacy I can leave you. I wish I had gone to church with you now, my girl. If I have strength next Sunday, I will go.' But two hours after he was dead."

We scarcely spoke again, until Phillis brought in our dinner. The afternoon passed in our usual sleepy, old-folks' way, but when tea and lamp-light banished our drowsiness, we found that in the meantime Agnes had made considerable progress with Ruth's knitting.

When Phillis came to remove our tea equipage she announced that Alice M'Callum was in the kitchen. "If you are not particularly engaged, sir, she has a message from her brother in London," said Phillis.

"Bring her in," directed my sister, "and I hope she has brought the drawings which she promised to show us."

Alice came immediately; her pale face freshened by the healthy March breezes.

In one hand she held a folded envelope, and in the other, a small, worn portfolio. Miss Herbert had resumed Ruth's knitting, but she looked up and smiled and nodded as our ex-servant entered.

Alice had brought good news. A little kindness is a very good investment when it secures us the first edition of all pleasant tidings concerning those we have aided. She had brought a sovereign from Ewen as his subscription towards the St. Cross repairs, and she confided to us the history of this sovereign. Ewen had sold six little sketches at some picture shop in London, and the piece of gold was his payment.

"And I hope there are more in that portfolio," said Ruth, "for I want to see some. Take off your bonnet and shawl, child, or you will not feel their benefit when you go out again into the cool night air."

So Alice carried her wrappers to the

sofa, and then returned to the table in her dark, tight dress, with its prim linen collar and cuffs. Agnes Herbert left her seat, and helped her to untie the knotted strings of her portfolio. When it was opened, she withdrew a little, that Ruth might have the best view.

The first which Alice displayed was the drawing which her brother had given to George Wilmot, a ruined boat on a moonlit wharf. It was a simple affair, the paper and other materials employed being of the very cheapest description. And yet there was something in the sketch which many a gilt-framed picture lacks. It made me think of the lives which at first gladden happy households, and yet end in corruption and misery on the seething shores of the river Thames. It was, somehow, like a prayer for such. I wonder if it was in Ewen's mind when he drew it. Very likely not. If the soul of an artist or a poet be

once enlisted in God's service, I believe his brush or his pen becomes the unconscious mouthpiece of God's oracle. Over that picture Ruth lingered a long while.

The next was quite a different scene. A sunny, sloping meadow, with a river winding in the distance, one or two sleepy sheep in the foreground, and a single bird in the blue English sky. I knew the scene. It was the great field where I had first spoken to Ewen M'Callum.

"Oh I remember that!" exclaimed Agnes, startled.

Alice looked up, surprised.

"Have you seen it before?" asked Ruth.

"Yes," she answered, turning to Alice, and adding, half-aside, "we chanced to come upon your brother whilst he was drawing it, and I remember it well because afterwards we took the same subject."

Who were "we"? I wondered. But

Alice only smiled, and seemed quite satisfied with the explanation, and passed on to another picture.

There were one or two other sketches of local scenery, all very beautiful. Then Alice produced two more drawings, the only ones which were mounted on cardboard. "These are a pair," said she, "and they are only in my charge. The others Ewen gave me, but these he asked me to keep for him. He did them in London, and brought them home on Christmas-day. I think he took the subject from some verses which he has copied on the back."

"I took one, and Ruth took the other. Mine represented a poorly furnished chamber, whose single ornament was an unframed portrait on the wall. Before it sat a young man with a book on his knee, from which he seemed to have just looked up. There were traces of laborious work about the figure, which showed our artist was a novice

in this line. Behind the drawing I found this verse, written in a close, dark, characteristic hand :—

"For like an angel's had her face
To his eyes always seemed:
On waking and on sleeping dreams
Her beauty ever beamed:
And the poor orphan boy, alas!
Was happiest when he dreamed!"

Turning to the picture Ruth had taken, I found it represented a church porch. The door was ajar, and one could see white dresses and gay flowers within. Leaving the porch was a man, about seven years older than the hero of the other scene—and Ewen had evidently striven to preserve the character of the countenance, through the change from early youth to maturity. The verses attached were as follows :—

"He sauntered up the rough hewn steps,
The doors were open wide,
And there,—before the altar old,
At her brave father's side,
With some one on her other hand,—
Stood Lady May, a bride!

* * * * *

"Ah, why! ah, why? that question came
To Fulke, without reply,
As he gazed on the village homes,
The blue, out-reaching sky,
The ancient church, the old red house,
And left them with a sign."

As I read these quotations aloud, Agnes whispered to my sister, who responded, "Are they really, my dear?" then addressing me, "Edward, Miss Herbert says those verses are taken from a poem which her father wrote in his last story."

"Oh, how strange!" said Alice, smiling with pleased surprise; "I wonder if Ewen knew it! He never told me."

"What do you think of these two pictures, brother?" queried Ruth.

"I am a bad art-critic," I replied. "They are very pretty, but to my mind scarcely as pleasing as the landscapes."

"Their execution is not as good just because the aim is higher," said Agnes Herbert, eagerly. "I think Mr. M'Callum's

skill is scarcely equal to his ambition—as yet. But these are the best in the portfolio. Look at the two different expressions modifying the same features!"

"I believe Ewen has taken his own reflection in the glass for his model," observed Ruth. "The face and the whole figure remind me of him."

"George Wilmot insists on the likeness," rejoined Alice, "but I can't see it, ma'am" —pondering over the drawing—"or at least, a very little. Ewen is much better-looking."

"Your brother is certainly a genius, Alice," I remarked.

"I always thought so, sir," she answered, very quietly indeed.

"Now, speaking confidentially, Alice," I said, "do you think Ewen would prefer some artistic occupation to his present office-work? Do you think it is a drudgery to him?"

"Oh no, sir," she replied, quite frankly;

"I am sure he is happy. Indeed, I believe he greatly prefers things as they are. At Christmas I heard grandfather and him talk about something of the kind, and Ewen said the best life for a genius was one which kept him at a fair balance with everyday life. Those were his own words, sir. And he was not speaking of himself."

"I am sure he is right," said Agnes, warmly.

"Yes, truly," I responded, "a genius, to be above his fellows, must be a good, common-place man, and something besides. Is he higher than others for having what they have not, if he lack something which they have?"

"Ah!" said Ruth, "I never blame the good old woman who boxed King Alfred's ears because he let the cakes burn, while he pondered over his miserable country. Served him right!"

"But you would not have had him forget

his country for the cakes," pleaded Agnes, gently.

"No; he might have watched them and thought of it while he did so. 'Twould have been good exercise for his eyes and his mind. And I daresay the dame's punishment did him good, and he was the better king for it afterwards," said my sister.

"But she need not have been so rough," Agnes remonstrated.

"That was the manner of the time," Ruth retorted; "if she had been a cruel woman she would not have given him any more cakes, and there would have been an end of King Alfred!"

"Ah, that is it," said the other. "I was sure you wouldn't think it right to spoil another's whole life, for one instance of folly."

At this juncture, Phillis put in her head and announced, "Mrs. Irons has come to fetch Miss Herbert."

"Perhaps you will like to come with us, Alice," said Agnes, as she assisted her in putting the pictures into the portfolio. "Then you will have the benefit of Mrs. Irons's protection as far as the Farm—the loneliest part of your journey."

"Thank you, ma'am," answered Alice, "I shall be very glad, though I am not at all afraid."

"Neither am I," said Agnes; "but we may as well save our courage till we need it."

"Now, I hope you have enjoyed yourself sufficiently well to come again very soon," said I, shaking hands with Miss Herbert.

Miss Herbert penitently gave a suitable promise.

"And give our kindest regards to your grandfather," said Ruth, bidding good-bye to Alice; "and when you write to Ewen, tell him we wonder why we have no letter

from him, and we suppose he has found so many friends in London that he has quite forgotten everybody at Upper Mallowe, except his own family."

Alice laughed gaily. "Ewen has not, she said. "Ewen never will. But he fears to be troublesome, ma'am."

"Then just tell him my opinion," retorted Ruth, "and then, I think, though he is Scotch—by descent—he can scarcely have sufficient obstinacy and pride to persist any longer in his own way."

Alice laughed again, and promised to deliver the message *exactly*, with an emphasis on the word. She perfectly understood my sister. Then they went off. And presently, as they crossed the garden, we heard their clear voices mingling with the harsher metallic tones of the severe upper servant of the Great Farm.

"Those two girls nearly realize the quaint old fictions wherein the maid was

as much a gentlewoman as the mistress," I remarked.

"Is that such a wonder?" asked Ruth.

"Is it a common case?" I questioned, in return.

"No, but it should be," she replied; "and it would be, if masters and mistresses had a right idea of service."

"What do you think the right idea?" I asked.

"That man's whole duty to man is service," she answered, "and that, therefore, everybody is somebody's servant, and that he stands highest who best serves the greatest number."

"That lad Ewen is evidently a clever fellow," I observed, presently.

"Yes, indeed, poor boy!" said Ruth.

And then we sat in silence, and I pondered over the pictures I had seen, and the talk we had held about them. And I wondered if Miss Herbert drew nearly as

well as Ewen. "We took the same subject," she said. Who are "we"? Not her uncle, surely. No; my mind rejected that surmise. Who can "we" be? Is it not tantalising to hear a riddle, without its answer?

CHAPTER IV.

A PLAN FOR A HOUSEHOLD.

On the first Sunday in April, St. Cross was closed, and Mr. Marten held service in the great room of the Refuge. This certainly had one good result; it led many parishioners to that place who had never been induced to visit it before, and, in consequence, several stray shillings found their way to its funds. Of course, the enlargement of the house, necessary for its proposed orphanage, could not be proceeded with while the building was needed for public worship; but I arranged with the builder that this improvement should be carried out as soon as the church was in a fair way of completion.

At the same time, it occurred to me to buy a piece of land close to the Church green. The next time we met Mr. Marten, we took him to survey my purchase. It lay on a gentle inclination behind St. Cross, and commanded a fine open view of the surrounding country.

"I intend to build a house on it," I said.

"A fine healthy site," he answered; "but are you not very comfortable in your present quarters?"

"Oh, yes, indeed," I replied, "ours is a thoroughly good old house, which suits us exactly. A house fit for birth, and death, and sickness, for making love and marriage —not that Ruth or I will require most of its capabilities, but a house is not a home without them."

"Then no new houses are homes, or at least very few," said the rector, dismally stroking his chin, and thinking of more than his words.

"I mean to try and make one," I responded. "Is there any reason why old houses should be better than new ones? In most things the world does not go backwards."

"No, nor in this, really," replied Mr. Marten; "but a thoroughly good house costs money, and in this matter, cash seems scarcer now than formerly."

"I think we are getting to the root of the evil," I observed. "Money is much more plentiful now than it used to be, but every one pretends to be richer than he is, and if a man have enough money to build a real cottage, he builds a sham villa instead."

"And directly he gets fifty pounds a year more, he removes to a greater sham," said Ruth.

"The right method," I said, "is to build a place thoroughly good in its way, however humble that way may be. If it be only a

barn, build it so that it may remain unchanged when the mansion is built before it. Why not follow the example of our fathers, and rear houses so good and substantial that our successors shall esteem it an honour to keep them up, and may gratify their own tastes by enlarging and beautifying, rather than by destroying?"

"But then the march of fashion soon strides over neighbourhoods," observed Mr. Marten, "and the son blushes to name where his father lives, and never does so without the modification, 'It was so different then!' And yet I think if there were more right feeling in the world, localities would not be mapped out as at present—in one, outer life all colour and gilding; in another, all mildew and mist."

"You may well say 'outer life,'" said Ruth, grimly, "for inner life is much the same queer mixture everywhere. I believe

there are as many heartaches in mansions as in huts."

"But might there not be fewer in both, if they did not keep aloof from each other?" I pleaded. "Would not a kindly interest in others' welfare be a healthy stimulant to many an empty, irritable mind? And mere almsgiving can never give this interest, which naturally grows from near neighbourhood and habitual knowledge. And, on the other hand, would not the world be spared many an outburst of evil passion, if the despair which breeds such were checked by the reassurance of God's protection in a comforting human presence?"

"But still, some localities really grow unbearable," said Mr. Marten.

"Just because they are deserted," I answered. "If people of means and cultivated tastes would stay in them, they could not become unbearable. And though cleanliness and elegance may cost more under

these circumstances than under others, let wealthy men remember that the truest charity is that which works indirectly. There is far more self-denial and love in remaining on the spot, to confront the struggle which one's weaker neighbours *must* wage, than in flying from the scene of action, and then sending back a scanty supply of ammunition. Then, if exertion and example fail to ward off all the surrounding discomforts, let such as remain be cheerfully endured as God's discipline—far better than man's."

"Ah, yes," said Ruth, "if folks only stand steady in the path of duty, they will find penance enough without mounting Simon Stylites' pillar."

"Let us remember," I went on, "that in the few mixed neighbourhoods still left in London, however deep the poverty of the poor, we never hear of those frightful deaths from starvation and neglect which horrify us

in parishes where the richest people are those just able to struggle on without assistance. Let us also remember, when we hear of aged people dying on the bare floors of empty rooms, that many of them have been industrious folks, though engaged upon those humble works to which the necessities of the labour-market forbid wages which will permit saving. Therefore they have had employers, from whom time and distance have separated them, and who only recall their old servants when they hear of their miserable end. I think it would be so much better if commercial men could condescend to keep to the places which keep them."

"But it must be very expensive and difficult to rear a refined family among coarse surroundings," said Mr. Marten.

"Under present circumstances it is so difficult that it is almost impossible," I returned. "As a lonely bachelor I could reside

in my house of business in the city, though I was only thought a lunatic for my pains. But as a married man I could scarce have done so. No, the mistakes which have been committed cannot be hastily remedied. But where it is still possible that a neighbourhood be maintained as an epitome of God's world, with the rich and poor side by side, each to comfort and sustain the other, there let every thoughtful man beware how he begin the evil work of desertion."

"You see the rich draw the rich to them," said Mr. Marten, "even in rural districts, and often in positive contradiction to the dictates of nature. Our village of Upper Mallowe is much healthier than Mallowe itself," he added, turning to Ruth, "for the one is on a hill, and the other in its valley; but then, you see, Mallowe boasts a manor house, and therefore every wealthy man in the adjacent country is anxious to live there."

"Not my brother, sir," remarked Ruth.

"Not your brother, thank God," Mr. Marten was pleased to answer (and I wont say I did not like to hear it!). "But even since my sojourn in this village, an aged farmer, retiring on a considerable fortune, and coveting a quiet little villa for him and his old wife to die in immediately built the same in Mallowe proper. Nobody lives here except Mr. Garrett, the farmers on their own land, their cottages, and a few trades-people, who go away as soon as they can."

"And the clergyman," I added. "And no place is past redemption so long as the clergyman stands bravely to his post. He should always live in his parish, whatever it be."

"So I think," replied Mr. Marten; "only it is sometimes awkward when no house is provided," he added, ruefully.

Ruth and I exchanged glances and smiles.

"What a discursive conversation we

have had," I remarked, strolling about my new possession, "and it has all started from this little bit of ground, whereon I wish to build a house exactly suited to a well-educated family of moderate means. I want it to be so good and so pleasing as to prove a suggestion for every future erection in Upper Mallowe, that people may say, 'Let our house be at least as comfortable as that behind St. Cross, and then as much better as possible.'"

"But I don't like to see many houses alike," interrupted Ruth. "To follow an example is good, but to imitate is bad. God made no two minds precisely alike, so if two minds produce the same results, one is in slavery."

Then there was a pause.

"Mr. Marten must dine with us to-day," I observed presently; "for to-morrow I must give my instructions for the plan of this house, and I want some hints."

"You must be a better judge than me," he said; "but I shall be very happy to dine with you nevertheless."

And so we adjourned to our own house, and when we had discussed a pheasant and a custard, and the cloth was removed, Ruth placed before us pens, ink, and paper, and then took up her knitting in a way that said she expected us to set about our business immediately.

"For what class of people is this house intended?" asked Mr. Marten.

"For people with about two hundred pounds a year, or a little more," I replied.

"Then it must be built so that its proper maintenance would not make undue demands upon that sum," he remarked, promptly, as if he had studied the exact possibilities of such an income, which very likely he had, considering it was his own.

"Certainly," I responded, "and so it

must not be too large, and yet there must be several rooms, for the income does not fix the size of the family."

"No, indeed," sighed the rector, shaking his head.

"Well, isn't that a very good thing?" I queried. "Would you like poverty to deprive us of life's sweetest blessings? Which do you think the most fortunate—the poor man with loving children, or the rich man with none? I know my own answer to that question. But to return to our house," I added, taking up a pen and marking on the paper, "I think the door must be in the middle, so let that dot represent it."

"Ah, I like that," remarked the rector, "nothing is better than a nice entrance hall with rooms at each side."

"It must be broad enough to leave a good passage beyond a table and chair and hat-stand," I said, still drawing on the paper; "that is so handy when many messengers

come who wait for answers, as in the case of most professional men."

"And how many rooms on the ground-floor?" asked Marten.

"One at each side of the passage," I replied, "a study and a parlour."

"Then where is the kitchen?" interrupted Ruth.

"At the end of the hall shall be a door," I explained; "this door shall open into a small entry, with three other doors, those on the right and on the left opening into the garden, and that facing the hall into the kitchen. So, by opening the doors on the right and left a current of fresh air may pass between the sitting apartments and the kitchen, whenever needed to cut off all over-salubrious culinary smells."

"Then all the bedrooms will be up-stairs?" queried Mr. Marten.

"Certainly," I answered.

"Have you considered a staircase?"

asked Ruth, "amateur architects never do."

"But I have," I replied. "I tell you the front part of the hall shall be wide enough for two people to walk abreast past a roomy table and a comfortable chair. This width is unnecessary at the back of the house. There a flight of stairs can rise to the landing, which will be above the kitchen entry and the back part of the hall, and will be lit by two windows, right and left, like the doors below. All the bedrooms will open on this landing except one, which must be gained through another."

"I don't exactly understand how you arrange the stairhead," my sister observed.

"Neither do I," I admitted, candidly; "but I suppose the architect will do so."

"I think I can see how it could be managed by means of a gallery," said Mr. Marten, criticising my rough plan; "but as

you say, these details are best left to professional skill."

"And how many bedrooms do you mean to have?" asked Ruth.

"I think of five," I replied. "One for the heads of the family, extending over the study, one over the kitchen, two over the parlour, and a little extra chamber above the hall."

"Then you intend the study and the parlour to be rather large?" remarked Mr. Marten.

"Each about sixteen feet by fifteen," I answered.

"But I never thought a man with two hundred a year could live in so large a house as this," he said, very briskly.

"I mean it for an income of two hundred exclusive of house rent," I replied.

"Oh, indeed!" said he, in quite another tone.

"Shall you have the walls papered or wainscoted?" asked Ruth.

"Wainscoted," I replied.

"It costs more at first, but it's cheapest in the end," said my sister, "and it can be kept clean much more easily; and whenever labour is saved, money is saved."

"And the kitchen shall have a red-brick floor," I went on, "and the hall shall be tiled, not with very smart tiles, which put ordinary furniture to shame, but good, neat, plain ones, so that the heart of the mistress need never be vexed by splitting oil-cloth, or ripping carpet."

"How thoughtful you are!" said the rector, with a grave smile.

"And build the house itself with red bricks," put in Ruth. "They look best with the green leaves in the summer, and in autumn and winter the sight is as good as a fire!"

"It shall be built with red bricks, Ruth," I assented. "That is another good old fashion which has fallen into disuse."

"Also on account of its cost," said Mr. Marten.

"A short-sighted policy," I answered, "considering that houses are now made of inferior material, and then covered with paint or cement, which needs constant renewal, and gives the owner the perpetual worry and mortification always caused by fading shabbiness."

"But I almost think two hundred a year is too little to keep house upon," remarked Mr. Marten presently.

"Too little for the fantastical existence of boarding-school misses and dandies," answered Ruth, "but just enough for the honest life of good women and brave men."

"But what service can a man secure with such an income?" asked the rector.

"The best service," replied my sister, "the service of love."

"What! set his wife to household work!" exclaimed the rector, aghast.

"If I were a man I would not marry a woman who was unworthy of such work," said Ruth, drily.

"Unworthy? No!" said Mr. Marten. "But when a woman is highly educated——"

"What is the end of her education?" inquired my sister. "To play a little worse than a professional pianist?—to paint not so well as an artist?—to talk French so that foreigners can just guess what she means? If she can do better than this, she herself can add to the family income; but then, unless she be a wonder, the home will not be quite as happy as if she devoted herself to make the best of her husband's earnings."

"I could not endure that *my* wife should earn money," said the rector, emphatically.

"I will tell you the plain truth, Mr. Marten," retorted Ruth; "you would like to set up your wife as an idol, and then, like all other idols, she would break. Has a woman no soul, sir?" she added, almost

severely. "Is she neither to serve, nor to save, nor to earn? Will you leave her no way to heaven, sir?"

"I know good women feel with you," answered Mr. Marten, reflectively; "but I always thought it was the duty of the men who loved them to save them from themselves."

"To what danger do their natural impulses spur them?" asked Ruth, rather sarcastically. "On what precipice does a good housewife stand?"

"Oh, I don't mean danger exactly," said the rector; "but is not a cultivated mind likely to be dwarfed if set to work which could be as well done by an uncultivated one?"

"The simplest task is done better for real cultivation," answered my sister; "and the raw materials of education are just like seeds, quite valueless if they do not bring forth a crop."

"And let me remark," said I, "that most great and good women—and many who have been merely great—had their full share of the commonest domestic duties."

"Yes, truly," assented Ruth. "Was Grizel Baillie less a lady because she knew the worth of a farthing? Was Joan of Arc less heroic because she had doubtless scrubbed many a floor? Did not Emily Brontë blacken the grates in Haworth Parsonage? And upon my word, she was better employed then than when she wrote 'Wuthering Heights!'"

"Ruth, my dear," I said, "you will prejudice Mr. Marten anew against domestic work on the novel ground that it strengthens a woman's mind a little *too* much!"

"Well, if the woman be not a Christian, I'll own that is its tendency," she granted. "But if she be, no matter how strong her mind grows, she'll not forget her place, and

her husband will be none the weaker for her strength."

"Then you don't think two hundred a year a bad income to marry on?" said Mr. Marten, smiling.

I must here observe that he had no idea we knew it was his own. That information we had obtained from the *Clergy List*, and I hope my readers will wait awhile ere they condemn us for undue curiosity.

"I think two hundred a year a very good beginning," I answered, "while energy is strong and hope is high. Nay, if all else were promising, I should blame one who, having so much, yet waited for more. For why did God give us hope if we are to avoid occasions for its exercise?"

"Reasonable hope," put in Mr. Marten.

"And if an industrious and able man of thirty possess two hundred a year, is it unreasonable in him to hope that he may have three hundred by the time he is forty?" I asked.

"But if not?" queried the rector, with a dubious smile.

"Well," I said, "should God deny a blossom to our hopes, and give us poverty instead of wealth, and sorrow instead of joy, He will not deny us hearts strong enough to answer, 'It is better so.'"

"Then what becomes of improvidence—is there no such thing?" inquired Mr. Marten.

"Ah, truly there is," responded Ruth, "when a man marries a fool, or a woman does ditto."

"There are other kinds of improvidence, too," I remarked; "when a man marries without reasonable prospect of a permanent income, or without any little fund to fall back upon in emergencies. And yet I have observed that even these cases prosper better than they seem to deserve."

"Should you speak thus to every one, sir?" said the rector, carelessly sketching on a blank sheet.

Now, why did he try to make our conversation personal? I was glad when Ruth answered for me, saying—

"Of course not. Truths, like physic, must be administered to the right patients. For what cures one, kills another."

At that moment there came to our door a workman from St. Cross, inquiring for the rector. So Mr. Marten bade us a hasty good-bye, and hurried off. Orderly Sister Ruth instantly began to arrange the papers scattered over the table. Presently she paused smiling, and pushed a sheet towards me—

"I declare he has drawn a lady's head!' said she.

CHAPTER V.

THE FIRST MAY.

We learned that May-day did not pass unobserved in Upper Mallowe, but that it was a time much dreaded by all prudent fathers and mothers. The festivities were a mere degeneration of the old May-poles and dances, having forfeited whatever beauty and merriment those possessed, and retained only their riotous licence, thereby drawing to our quiet village all the disorderly characters within ten miles thereof. May-day was a sad date in many a humble cottage, marking the time when the only son first came home "not himself," or when the daughter conceived that fatal passion for flattery and finery which ultimately led

her away and away,—God only knows where!

Mr. Marten knew and deplored the evil, and it was he who first mentioned it to me, along with his own unsuccessful attempts to grapple therewith. He had preached about it, with stern and sorrowful lamentations; he had made personal appeals to the younger members of his flock, nay, when the fateful day came, he had startled the godless scene with terrible words of warning and condemnation. Startled it truly, but not to awed repentance, only to coarse jests and rude laughter. And now, when the time of trouble drew nigh, he came to me, saying, "What shall I do?"

"The Sunday before May-day," he remarked, "I always look round my church, and wonder which boy or which girl I shall never again see in the accustomed seat. It never passes without some such result."

"And have you never tried a counter attraction?" I asked.

"Last year I got up a lecture on the 'Origin of Old Customs,' with illustrations," he answered, with a ludicrous expression of hopelessness.

"And who attended?" inquired Ruth.

"A few old people, and two or three very small girls," he replied.

"Did they like it?" pursued my sister.

"I cannot say," he responded.

"Did *you* like it?" she asked, pointedly.

"I might have preferred a walk in the fields," he answered, looking up, with a rueful smile.

"Then judge others by yourself," said she.

"The only remedy lies in a counter attraction," I remarked, "and it must be prepared very carefully, for each failure will make the matter more difficult. And in

these things we must always remember that although it is sometimes good to unite instruction and amusement, yet the combination can never supply the place of pure play."

"Ah, yes," observed Ruth, "whenever I hear a child say it likes 'sensible games' best, I always think, "You little idle simpleton, you'll choose differently when you've done some real work."

"Then you would ruin the makers of scientific toys," said Mr. Marten, smiling.

"No, I would not," she answered; "they can make them for the schoolroom. Let a child learn about steam engines and so forth, but don't expect it to find merriment therein."

"Sir," I said, "will you clear your conscience from the burden of these May-day sports, and lay it upon mine?"

"Most gladly will I do so," he replied, "if—if I ought."

"I think you should," I answered, "and I will explain my reason. Perhaps I shall succeed better than you just because I am not a clergyman."

"Is it so?" he sighed; "will people never believe it possible that a clergyman honestly wishes their good?"

"Not exactly that," I responded, "but their instincts cry out for 'fun,' and they have a notion that a clergyman will give but a diluted draught thereof, and will only tolerate that for the sake of the 'moral.'"

"And as there's never smoke without a little fire," put in Ruth, "so there's no popular notion which has not some reason for it. The sooner such reason is destroyed the better, only till that time, there are certain wholesome movements in which a clergyman's best place is the background."

"Well, if you and your brother will kindly devise some successful May-day

celebration, I am sure I shall be most happy to appear as your most insignificant guest," said Mr. Marten, humbly.

"And then you will have a magnificent chance of convincing your parishioners you are none the less a man because you are 'a parson,'" I said. "I think it's a very good thing for all parties when a clergyman has an opportunity of appearing among his people in an unofficial character."

And so we arranged between us that the rector should be kept as much in ignorance of our plans as any one in the parish, and that we should send him an invitation in due course; and away he went, declaring he should be quite restless and uneasy in his mind until it reached him, and adding that wonders would never cease, since he, too, was allured into eager expectation of the coming May-day.

So Ruth and I conspired together, and we took Agnes Herbert and the M'Callums

into our plot. We settled directly that the festival must begin early in the day, and must be of a free, out-of-door character. There could be nothing better than the ancient custom of "getting in the May," which, owing to an early season, was now in beautiful blossoms. Strange to say, May-day at Upper Mallowe had been kept without any shadow of this usage, and the advent of God's flowers had been celebrated merely by rough dances, inane songs, gambling, and intemperance. Surely it was not hard to find better ways of holiday-making. And I firmly believe that popular instinct will seldom choose the evil and reject the good,— if it only have a fair choice.

On the twenty-sixth of April, our invitations were issued on neatly-printed cards, Agnes and Alice filling in the names of the individuals or families addressed, so that each invitation had a pleasant personal tone, and ran as follows:—

"Mr. Edward Garrett hopes to see Mr. John Jones and family (as the case might be), at the Oak on the Green, at nine o'clock in the morning of the first of May. Why should good old customs die out? Is not summer as great a blessing to us as to our forefathers?

> 'Can such delights be in the street
> And open fields, and we not see't?
> Come, we'll abroad, and let's obey
> The proclamation made for May.'"

Besides sending one to everybody in and about our own village, I sent a few cards to some old friends at Mallowe, among them the present owner of Meadow Farm, the only son of my Lucy's eldest brother.

The eventful morning arose bright and warm, and by half-past eight Ruth and I were at the rendezvous. I must mention that the Green lay behind our Refuge, so that its back gate opened upon it. Old Mr. M'Callum and Alice had stocked the garden

with every available seat, for the comfort of any elderly people who might honour the gathering with their presence. Indeed, the whole house presented a holiday appearance, for in consideration of its famous "supper room," we intended to close our festivities there.

Early as we were, many were before us, and amongst them Mr. Herbert and his niece. The farmer was in his element, chatting with his labourers, complimenting their blushing wives, and praising their bonnie children. Bessie Sanders too was there, talking to Alice M'Callum, and helping her to welcome some very aged village matrons, who were saying "they wanted to see the fun, though, dearie me, fun was getting hard work for their likes, now-a-days." Annie Sanders was not there, but that valuable member of society made her appearance about noon, being, I presume, as soon as she could get ready. I

regret to say she was the cause of the only breach of propriety which occurred during the day, inasmuch as when she arrived a small boy called out, "Hulloo, Jem, here's a guy!" Of course I reproved the lad, but, except to his good manners, there was no harm done, for Bessie did not hear him, and Annie decidedly liked it, accepting it as the malignity of an unappreciative world, instead of blushing at the truthful description of her own slovenly appearance.

As we walked through the assembled people, shaking hands and exchanging greetings, a sound of sweet singing suddenly reached us, and Mr. Marten and the boys of his choir came trooping across the green, trilling a merry May-day carol. And did not we applaud when they came amongst us!

And ever and anon as we lingered by the oak on the Green, while tardy neighbours joined us—some in a flutter which denoted

they had not made up their minds to come till the last minute—Mr. Marten and his choir boys lifted their voices and sang appropriate glees. But before ten we started on our rambles, Mr. M'Callum remaining in the Refuge garden to dispense sundry simple dainties to such old people as had lost all inclination for pedestrianism.

Away we went; each free to follow his own tastes,—to run races, to search for hawthorn in sober earnest, to carry the babies, to go a little aside, whispering—"dear me, where's the harm?" When my Lucy said something which has done me good all my life, she did not speak in a room full of company! As for Ruth, nobody was more popular or more delighted. She got on confidential terms with everybody. The courting couples seemed to feel she knew all about it, and so attempted no concealment. Wherever Ruth went there was quite a little bustle round her, but her particular com-

panion was young Weston, and a fine-looking honest-hearted fellow he was, like his father before him.

Presently I noticed George Wilmot. Just as our whole party turned into a lane, so narrow that it reduced us to something like rank and file, he ran before, and then stood still and watched us pass. As I came up, I said to him—

"I hope you are enjoying yourself, my boy. Are you looking for anybody?"

"He doesn't seem to be here," he answered, eagerly watching as the crowd passed by.

"Who is he?" I asked.

"The gentleman who brought me to you, sir," he replied.

"Should you like to see him?" I queried.

"Yes, 'cos it's all so nice," he said, simply.

"What is that?" inquired Agnes Herbert, who happened to be beside me.

"Did you never hear that story?" I questioned in reply, and drawing the lad along with us, I narrated his first arrival at our house. She listened with very quiet interest, and just as my tale ended, her uncle came upon us, and claimed my attention. But half an hour later I found the rough farm-lad still walking beside her, and, from a few words which I overheard, I discovered that the delicate womanly tact had made a far better mutual ground of their common acquaintance with London than I had done.

Long before noon the lads of our party were laden with May-blossom trophies, but I was glad to see these were only boughs, and that as no hawthorn trees were seriously broken, the meadows would look none the worse for our spoils. Presently, as we came to a hedge, white with blossom, I discovered the reason for this thoughtfulness, by hearing Alice M'Callum's soft, Scottish voice

lifted in gentle exhortation. Where did she learn this tenderness for nature? Very likely she has not read Wordsworth. But who is most akin to the poet—those who know his words, or those who have his heart?

"What a pretty girl that is!" remarked young Weston to Ruth, just as I joined them.

"Which?" queried my sister.

"The one with the Highland name," he answered. "She has a real pretty face."

"And as good as she's pretty," responded Ruth, "ay, and far better; only a man always begins at the wrong end of a woman's qualities."

"I fancy I have seen her before," said Mr. Weston. "Will you say her name again?"

"Alice M'Callum," said my sister; "and very likely you have seen her before, for she was formerly lady's-maid at Mallowe Manor."

"Oh indeed!" he said, with a slightly fallen countenance; "I remember now. There was some misfortune in her family."

"There was a sad accusation brought against her brother," I remarked, "who seems to me as fine a young man as I know. But he is now doing very well in London. As for Alice, the whole affair was only the trial furnace which tests pure gold."

"But men seldom like tried gold in women's nature," said Ruth, rather sharply; "they prefer untried gilt. Perhaps because they know they don't deserve the other."

"Is Miss M'Callum now living at home?" asked Mr. Weston presently.

"When we first came here she was our upper servant," Ruth answered. "She preferred our service to the Manor, that she might be near her grandfather. But she left us to live at our Refuge, where she is matron."

My sister had never before called Alice by this dignified name.

Here somebody called me away, and I was engaged with different members of our party for some time after, and when next I noticed young Weston he was climbing a steep bank to gather some pink hawthorn for the blushing matron of the Refuge.

"It is nearly time for me to go home, sir," she said, when she saw me.

"Very nearly, Alice," I answered.

"What! can't you stay with us?" queried Mr. Weston, as he descended, panting, with a face which nearly matched its floral treasures.

"Alice has business at home," I said, smiling, and then I passed on.

In a few minutes I missed her—and him also.

The rest of us did not return to the Refuge until about one o'clock. Ruth and I knew what we should find there. In its

back garden were two tables, groaning beneath the weight of huge joints and jolly pies, and enlivened by bunches of May, set in honest earthenware jugs. The lads cheered when they saw them. But there was not room for all to sit down together, so the juniors waited for a second "spread," and left their fathers and mothers, and uncles and aunts in our charge; and Miss Sanders and I provided for one table, and Mr. Herbert and Ruth for another. Alice wished to wait upon us, but I bade her reserve herself wholly for the youngsters. As for Mr. Weston, I found he had resolved to go or stay as she did, and they both lingered with us till we sang the good old Doxology, and I wondered if he knew that was the daily custom in his grandfather's house!

There was such a constant flow of good-natured chatter round the tables, that I had neither eye nor ear to spare. There never

were such victuals, so they said, and I heard one toothless old woman asking her "John" if the pie didn't mind him of what they had on their wedding-day? "It's forty-five years a-gone, but the taste of that pie brings it up better nor yesterday."

In about an hour's time the young people took our places, presided over by Mr. Marten and Agnes, young Weston and Alice. I daresay they did not talk about the repast, but deeds speak louder than words, and they did full justice to it. When they were deeply engaged with knives and forks, we discovered what they had done while we were at dinner. They had made a light arch over our garden gate and twined it with hawthorn, also fastening great bunches to the door-posts, so that the place looked quite a bower.

The day was warm and the sun was bright, so we old people were fain to rest ourselves on some turfy knolls and fallen

trees left on the village green. And when the young folks had finished dinner, they also felt rather tired, and were quite ready to join us. Then we had a little singing—good old songs which every one knows, and nobody tires over—"Home, sweet home," "Scots wha hae wi' Wallace bled" (that was Mr. M'Callum's), "Poor Jack Brown," and so forth.

Later in the afternoon, Mr. Marten paid a visit to the High Street, and brought back tidings that a few disreputable strangers were lounging listlessly about the inn. He also brought back an Italian organ-man with a monkey. The poor foreigner having heard some reports of festivity, had come down in hopes of a little harvest, and so in the end he was not disappointed, for Jacko's antics were a source of amusement to both young and old, and contributions in cash and kind did not fail.

In due time, tea and cake revived the

spirits of the whole party, and effectually aroused any old ladies who were inclined to be sleepy. After tea, we adjourned to the great room of the Refuge, taking with us the organ-man and Jacko, who by that time was on terms of personal friendship with most of the boys, who could understand his graphic gestures much better than his good-humoured master's broken English.

I hope nobody expects me to remember all the sports which enlivened the remainder of the evening. I recollect "Post" and "Proverbs," but in one or two other instances I blindly followed the instructions of the frank, smiling girls who volunteered to "teach" me, though I knew no more about the game when it was finished than when it began. In the course of the evening, a strange old gentleman and a young lady made their appearance, and Mr. Marten introduced them to us as his old

friends Lieutenant Blake, of the Royal Navy, and his only daughter, Marian. A jolly old sailor was Lieutenant Blake, and in ten minutes had quite caught the spirit of the evening, and sung sea-songs and spun yarns to such appreciative audiences, that some of the village mothers grew apprehensive lest their sons should be attacked with a seafaring fever. And two or three times in the evening, it did me good to hear Bessie Sanders laugh—not a careworn, middle-aged laugh, but one as buoyant and ringing as if she had no benumbing cross to lift the moment she passed her own threshold. And amid all the confusion of merriment sat the lonely Italian, with Jacko clinging round his neck, separated from us by the dread curse of Babel, but smiling at our glee, and murmuring melodious thanks for the little hospitalities we pressed upon him.

But at nine o'clock our friends began to

depart, and by ten no one remained but the Herberts, Mr. Weston, and ourselves, for Mr. Marten had escorted the Blakes to their home. We arranged that the organ-man should sleep at the Refuge, and one or two destitute creatures who had hoped to make some forlorn pence, perhaps not over honestly, by the old village festivities, availed themselves of the same privilege.

But when Agnes Herbert was arranging her wrappers, she found she had lost a little fancy pincushion, which she carried in her pocket, and I really thought she seemed inclined to cry over her loss, trivial as it seemed.

"Don't ye remember when the little gal tore her frock in the 'edge, miss?" asked George Wilmot; "well, you hadn't lost it then, 'twas from it you took the pin to fasten up the hole. I'm sure of it, 'cos I noticed it's being so pretty."

"Then I daresay I foolishly laid it on the

grass, and forgot to take it up," answered Agnes, "and it would soon get trodden down. It cannot be helped." But then I believe her eyes positively filled with tears, only she drew down her veil.

"I knows where it was, miss," said George, eagerly; "'twas by the 'edge of the field aback of the Low Meadow. I'll go and look for it to-morrow."

"I shall be so glad if you find it," exclaimed Agnes, turning to him brightly, "but it doesn't seem worth much trouble."

"Yes, miss, if you wants it," said the boy.

And so that matter ended, and Agnes went off with her uncle.

Mr. Weston accompanied us home, and supped with us, and Ruth and he made a duet in praising Alice M'Callum.

"I think she'd make a good wife," said he.

"So she would, but a good wife deserves a good husband," said Ruth.

"I hope she'll get a good one!" he ejaculated.

"Or else none," responded my sister.

"But, bless me, she'd draw any man's goodness to the top," said he.

"There's a great deal in that," answered Ruth.

And when Mr. Weston went away he promised another visit to Upper Mallowe very soon, and I had not the least doubt of his sincerity.

"We have all had a very happy day, brother," said Ruth, as we parted for the night.

So we had. And we heard that, before the poor organ-man and his monkey, Jacko, left the Refuge, he insisted that Alice should accept a sixpence towards the funds of the place. "He pointed up to the sky," Alice narrated, and said, "Not to pay—but for thanks to Him there." And long afterwards, while chatting in sundry village

parlours, I detected my invitation card stored among the small treasures of the house-mother's work-box. Ah, truly, though

> "I've heard of hearts unkind, kind deeds
> With coldness still returning:
> Alas! the gratitude of men
> Has oftener left me mourning."

CHAPTER VI.

AN OLD KNIFE.

NEXT morning I went for a stroll, and after idly straying about for some time, it occurred to me that I would go to the field behind the Low Meadow, and see if I could find any trace of the missing pincushion. I was not very surprised when I found both George Wilmot and Agnes busily engaged in the search. It was the lad's dinner-hour, and he had hurried over the meal, to gain a few minutes for the fulfilment of his promise. As for Miss Herbert, all I ever learned of her appearance on the scene was George's subsequent explanation that she was there "afore him," nor did she seem at all disposed to retire defeated. But just

before I arrived, they had found, not what they sought, but something else.

They were so eagerly examining it, that they did not notice my approach. George was sitting upon his heels, just as he had drawn back from a kneeling posture, and Miss Herbert stooped over him. They both started when they heard my voice, and the young lady turned and held out her hand, and George displayed his discovery.

It was a clasp knife, larger than the ordinary size, with a heavy brown handle, curiously carved, but much obscured by clay and dust, some of which George had rubbed away. The blade, red and blunt with rust, was partly open. I took it and tried to move it, but it was fixed in that position.

"I found it down among the long grass by the 'edge," said the boy. "I was feeling among the thickness, where we couldn't see, and I hit my hand agen somethin' hard, and says I, 'I got it, Miss:' but when I took

hold, I found it wor werry hard and straight, and stickin' into the ground, so I cleared the grass a bit till we could see, and there wor the knife a-standin' up, with the blade stabbed right into the earth."

"More than an inch of it underground," corroborated Agnes.

"I suppose somebody dropped it just as he had used it," I remarked, examining it.

"I think it must ha' been throwed a long way, sir," said George, "or it wouldn't have stuck in so precious hard and far. Knives is nasty things to chuck about that way."

Just then the church clock struck one, and Agnes touched his shoulder, and reminded him that he must hasten to his work, and not linger longer in her service.

"But you mustn't take that knife with you," I remarked, as he seemed about to put it in his pocket. "Half open as it is,

any accident might easily cause it to hurt you dreadfully."

"But the handle's such a beauty," said the boy, "and it would make me late if I ran home with it."

"Then give it to me," I said, "and I will call at the Refuge, and leave it with Mr. M'Callum for you."

"Thank ye, sir," he answered, cheerfully surrendering it; "an' if you please, Miss, I'll come back here in the evening an' look about again."

But instead of replying, Agnes exclaimed, ecstatically, "Here it is! here it is!" and plucked something from a bed of briar, and eagerly held up a little purple leather thing, with white flowers painted on it. It was but an impulsive burst of the vivacity kept in chains within her. In a second, she was again her own quiet self, with only a flush of pleasure lingering on her face.

"I wish I'd found it, Miss," said George Wilmot.

"Miss Herbert will take the will for the deed," I remarked.

"That I'm sure I do," she responded: "and remember, you reminded me where I had lost it. But I must make haste home now." And after she had shaken hands with me, she shook hands with the little boy too; and so she went away.

"Now, my lad, run away to your work," I said. So counselled, George Wilmot set off at a fine pace. Country air and healthy work had already done him good. As I stood and watched him, it pleased me to think, "If his mother can see him, she must be quite satisfied."

I turned my steps to the Refuge, carrying the rusted, soiled knife openly in my hand. I did not waste two thoughts on it—a half-spoiled, old thing, only valuable because it pleased a boy's fancy. Coming across the

fields, I approached the Refuge,—not from the High Street, but by way of the village Green,—and seeing its back-door open, I went in, and found Mr. M'Callum and Alice both in the supper room, packing up the crockery which had been used at the feast of the previous day. I laid the knife on the table, and was entering into its history, when an exclamation from Alice checked me.

"Grandfather, look!" she said, "it is his!"

As she uttered these words she did not raise her tone, and yet it gave me that thrilling sensation which homely folks call "the blood turning cold." Mr. M'Callum walked to the table, and examined the knife with great deliberation; then suddenly dropped it, looked straight before him, and said—

"Sae it is, lassie."

And his voice was almost terrible in its expression of determined resignation to the worst.

"What is this?" I whispered, after a short pause.

"Only that is George Roper's knife," said Alice, meeting my eyes, and speaking very quietly, but with breaks in her sentences. "He was seen to take it when he left home on—the last morning. And it was missing when he was—taken out of the water."

"But how can you be sure it is his?" I asked, in my turn advancing to the table, and bending over the defaced thing, now invested with such dreadful interest.

"Yes, indeed, I can," she answered. "Before I went to Mallowe Manor, Ewen used to bring it home for grandfather to sharpen for Mr. Roper, because he did it so well."

"And you are sure Mr. Roper's knife was never found after his death?" I questioned.

"Quite sure," she replied again; "for the police asked questions about it, and even searched over Ewen's things for it."

"Did your brother know anything of it?" I queried.

She shook her head. "Ewen told me that Mr. Roper had used a knife to cut some string during the regatta that morning," she answered; "and he thought he should have noticed if it had not been his usual one. But you know, sir, it is so hard to be sure about things one is accustomed to," she added.

"Just so," I said.

"Halloo!" cried a cheerful voice at the still open back-door; "so yesterday has not tired you too much for morning visits, Mr. Garrett."

It was our rector. As I turned, I remember his countenance was particularly bright. But the radiance sobered when he saw our anxious faces. With very few words I detailed the facts I had just learned, and then handed him the knife.

He had naturally taken interest in a

tragedy which involved the fates of two of his parishioners; therefore he remembered that, at the time of the murder, inquiries had been made concerning a missing knife belonging to the dead man. He even remembered the description of the lost article which Bessie Sanders had furnished. And when he looked at it, he said gravely—

"I have no doubt this is the same."

Then he rose from the seat he had taken, and carried it to the window for closer inspection.

"Ought anything to be done?" I queried, following him, and speaking in a whisper.

"I suppose the orthodox course would be to give it to the police," answered Mr. Marten, still twisting it about.

Alice caught our words, low as they were spoken, and all her woman-weakness rose within her, and, for a moment, it was stronger than her woman-strength. "Oh, Ewen, oh, my darling!" she cried, with a passionate

tenderness which no happiness could have wrung from her. "If it is all to come over again, you were better dead, Ewen, my own brother!"

"Whisht, whisht, lassie!" said her grandfather, "the Lord ne'er gies a cross wi'out poo'er to lift it. His holy will be done!"

"Even if the police had this, what can come over again?" observed the rector, soothingly. "The discovery of the knife has nothing to do with your brother."

"But it would bring up the old story and all the talk," said Alice, more calmly.

"So it might," he answered, "and as I cannot see how it can possibly give a clue to the real culprit, I think we shall keep the discovery a secret,—if we can."

"Then Ewen need never hear of it!" exclaimed Alice, eagerly, with gleaming eyes.

"I think he should," I observed; "the affair touched him very nearly, and he has a right to know all about it. Besides,

should it be divulged afterwards, the concealment would pain him more than the disclosure."

"Poor Ewen!" sighed his sister, so softly that I saw the words rather than heard them.

"But I don't think we need unsettle him in London by writing about it," I added. "Time enough to tell him when he comes home for his holidays."

"Ay, ay," murmured the grandfather; "it's ill putting worry in a letter."

"Mr. M'Callum," said the rector, suddenly speaking from the window-seat, where he was still examining the rusty blade, "I don't recollect that any wound was found on Roper's body?"

"There was nane," answered the old man, hobbling towards his questioner; "there was nae mark o' violence at a', only the doctors said his wrists seemed to ha' been held in a tight grip. Na, the puir creatur had just been drooned."

"I only asked you," remarked Mr. Marten, turning quite round, and quietly facing both the M'Callums, "because I believe there is blood on this knife."

"Ye dinna say sae, sir!" said Mr. M'Callum, astonished.

"With what knowledge we have now, this only deepens the mystery," I observed. "But we know Ewen and Mr. Roper had high words before they parted: is it possible they even came to blows?"

"Came to blows?—my brother? Not at all likely, sir," said Alice, quite proudly.

"I cannot be certain these stains are blood," explained the rector; "but I know something of chemistry, for it was a pet pursuit of mine, and if Mr. Garrett will accompany me, I will take it home, and make an analysis in his presence."

"It has occurred to me," I said, "that there is somebody else whom we must consult in the matter—somebody who is now

the rightful owner of this knife—Miss Sanders—the nearest kin to the dead man."

"So we should, sir," responded Alice, though her lips tightened as she said it. Her sense of right had recovered its balance.

"And even if she will not take it," I went on, "yet with this terrible story belonging to it, of course we cannot give it to little George; so I must break my promise to him; but you may say I will send him another. I suppose he knows something of your household trial, Alice?" I added, staying behind Mr. Marten, as she let us out.

"Yes, sir," she answered. "Ewen told him when he was here at Christmas."

"Why, then, George had only been with you a few days," I said.

"Yes, sir," she replied again; "but when he was scraping the snow off the High Street he heard something, and so he asked

a question, and then my brother told him the whole history."

"How did he take it?" I queried.

An involuntary smile burst over Alice's face as she answered—

"He said he wished there was somebody to take up the police when they took up the wrong people, for they were always making stupid blunders. That was all, sir."

Oh, terrible liberality of opinion learned in Ratcliff Highway! Is that how the majesty of the law looks there? So I suppose when the policeman tells a vagrant to "move on," the vagrant comforts himself with an adverse criticism, and does not think him such a canon of respectability as we do.

I accompanied Mr. Marten to his home, and by his servant I sent a message to Ruth that she must not expect me for an hour or two, as I intended to lunch with him. After hastily partaking of this meal, the

rector proceeded to his chemical inquisition. It verified his suspicions. The stains upon the blade were undoubtedly human blood.

It was rather late in the afternoon when we proceeded to Miss Sanders's house. The eldest sister admitted us—the brightness of yesterday scarcely faded from her face—and led us to the same little room where Ruth and I first made her acquaintance.

Presently Mr. Marten unfolded our errand. Bessie quietly took the knife, and set our last doubts at rest by pointing out a certain flaw on the handle, by whch she could positively identify it as her cousin's property.

"Then we give it up to you, ma'am," said Mr. Marten; "and shall you think it right to acquaint the police with its discovery?"

"Need I do so?" she asked.

"Not unless you choose," he replied; "but it is the usual course,—only you re-

member that a young man was accused of Mr. Roper's death."

"Yes, Ewen M'Callum," she said, mechanically.

"Well," the rector went on, "the finding of this knife gives no clue to the guilt of any other person, and if the fact transpire, it can only revive the old accusation against him, certainly not in a court of law, but in the village, and much useless misery will surely result."

Miss Sanders was silent.

"You believe Ewen M'Callum guilty?" I queried.

"I wish I could hope otherwise, sir," she said, quickly.

"We all think him innocent," observed Mr. Marten.

"Of course, the acquittal set him right with the world," she responded, rather bitterly.

"No indeed it didn't, poor fellow!" said I.

Her worn face, which had now quite lost the faint gleam of the day before, softened a little; but she did not speak. Neither did we. The knife lay on the mantel-piece, her thin fingers resting over it.

At last she stirred, so suddenly that I almost started, and Mr. Marten sprang up as if he understood that our visit was considered at an end. But Miss Sanders only moved to fetch her work-box, in the depths of which she proceeded to deposit the dismal relic of her dead sister's lover.

"So nothing need be said about it," she observed, locking the box, and speaking in quite an ordinary tone. "What a lovely evening it is, to be sure! Real summer weather!"

Mr. Marten disregarded these remarks, which she evidently intended to cover her escape from any thanks. "The M'Callums will understand how much they owe you," said he.

"And you will do Ewen this great kindness, though you still believe his guilt?" I ventured to inquire.

"We cannot always govern our thoughts," she answered, humbly; "but God helping, we may control our deeds. And besides, I have no doubt George terribly provoked whoever brought him to his end."

"But if it were Ewen," I pleaded, "it would be easier to forgive the sudden crime, than the persistent denial of it. In his nature, I could understand the one, but not the other."

"We need not puzzle ourselves about that," she sighed.

"Only I wish to make you feel his guilt an impossibility!" said I.

She shook her head with a sad smile.

"That does not matter while I act as if I thought him innocent," she replied. "I hope he is. I only wish that poor George had died without staining any soul

with his blood. He did harm enough while he lived."

So, with a few more thanks we took our leave. Mr. Marten returned to the Refuge, to assure the watchers there that all was well, and I pursued my way homeward.

It was truly a beautiful evening, and I found Ruth standing in the porch. As she greeted me, she added, archly—

"Mr. Weston has been here."

"Indeed!" I said; "and wouldn't he wait to see me?"

"Oh, he waited a little while," she answered; "but when I told him that the girl who brought your message said she thought you and the rector were busy about some Refuge-business, he said very likely you would go there, and he might as well walk round and meet you; but if he chanced to miss you, he would not return here, but would come again in a day or two."

When a young man promises to visit you soon, and then comes next day, and yet does not seem over-anxious to see your poor old face, what does it mean? And as I took my seat in my easy chair, I said to myself, "I wonder if Lucy's nephew is talking to Alice M'Callum at this instant? He will see she has been crying. Ah well! I think showers ripen love even better than sunshine!"

CHAPTER VII.

THE GHOST'S SEAT.

Mr. Weston kept his second promise of "calling again soon," and very agreeable he made himself in his own simple country fashion. But he went away remarkably early. He said he was not going straight home. Two or three days after, when Phillis returned from buying some tapes for my sister, she told us she thought we should have Mr. Weston to tea, for she saw him in the High Street. But he did not come. However, he arrived duly next week, and spent two or three hours with us. And when he rose to go, he found courage to announce openly that he intended to "look in" at the Refuge. He

blushed a little as he said it, and stroked his hat.

Nobody made any comment—only Ruth sent a message to Alice. When next we saw Alice she remarked that she had received this message, and executed whatever its directions were, which I forget. Nothing more.

One evening, still early in May, Ruth and I were taking a little stroll in the meadows, when we met Mr. Marten. He was in high spirits; in fact, that was now his normal condition. I was very glad to see him, because, at that particular time, I wanted to consult him about the terrible coloured window of St. Cross. I wished to get his consent for its removal. If I succeeded, I would substitute another at my own sole expense, quite apart from any assistance I rendered to the fund for general repairs.

Accordingly, I introduced the subject,

without any preamble, candidly adding, that I was prepared for objections, inasmuch as I believed my own sister did not share my views on the matter.

"I'm glad you tell that, Edward," said Ruth, "for it is the truth. Why should people's nerves be so fine as to shrink from the sight of what He endured? His own mother was strong enough to see it."

"Ah, so she was," I responded; "but, depend on it, she never spoke about it afterwards. And, Ruth, I fancy it would be those wrenched and worn with agony something like hers, who would shrink most from that picture, because they only would feel all its terrible meaning. I know *I* don't, but it pains me for their sake."

"I daresay I do not realize its horrors more than you do, sir," said the rector; "but yet it pains me for my own sake,—or

rather, it did so, for I doubt if it would have the same power now. I was often heroic enough to rejoice it was behind me!"

"Therefore, while in that state of mind," I remarked, "had you been one of the laity, and doomed to confront it, you would have stayed away from worship."

"A pretty morbid state of mind it must have been," said Ruth. "I can't understand such weakness."

"Then thank God, my sister," I observed, "and so pity those who can."

"Surely *you* can't," she answered, somewhat sharply, as if resenting the possibility of such weakness in so near a relation.

"Not in my own spirit, God be praised!" I replied; "but none the less I know it exists, as I know of blindness, or palsy, or other evils I have never suffered, or of poetry, or music, or other gifts which I have not—yet!"

"But such weakness, however pardonable, should be conquered, and not humoured," said Ruth, rather more gently.

"If you had a broken leg to be made whole," I argued, "would you walk upon it or rest it?"

"H'm—I don't know," she retorted; "I daresay I should use it more quickly than most people!"

"If it were mine, would you tell me to do the same?" I queried.

"You would not mind me if I did," said she, "for you are naturally lazy!"

"Can't you abstract all personalities from the question," I said, warming just a little, "and answer me fairly which you would recommend as the best course."

"Well," she answered, "in the first instance I should recommend the owner of the leg to take care it did not get broken, and I should say the same of hearts or spirits, or

whatever region is the seat of the whims you're talking about."

"But, in all cases, some unavoidable accidents will happen," I pleaded.

"So they will," said she.

"Then granting that, which is the best and surest cure—perfect rest, or exercise, while the limb is in a diseased state?" I questioned.

"Depends upon the patient," she replied, shortly. "If it were *my* duty to walk, then it would do me less harm than lying still; for that would set me in a fever."

"But if you were the nurse, should not you think it your duty to keep the invalid calm and——"

"Stop, Edward, stop," said my sister; "we need not argue it. You can do as you like about the window. I don't wish to hinder you."

"I always thought you could give an

argument fair hearing, Ruth," I remarked, a little hurt.

"So I can—except when it proves me in the wrong," she replied, with a sly glance, which quite restored my good temper. "And see, here is Mr. Herbert standing at his gate;" for that moment we came in sight of the Great Farm.

Of course we stopped for a chat. If Mr. Marten had been alone, I think he would have bowed and passed on; but as he was with us, he remained to speak. Ruth's first inquiry was for Agnes.

"She's somewhere in the house," answered her uncle. "If you will step inside, Miss Garrett, I will call her. Gentlemen, will you follow?" he added, with a slight hesitation.

"Mr. Garrett and I are consulting about some church alterations," said the rector, as an apology for declining the invitation.

"Well, can't you talk in our parlour?"

returned Mr. Herbert. "I guess Mr. Garrett can, and I suppose you are not talking secrets, are you?"

"Oh dear, no," I said. "We shall be very glad to include you all in our consultation;" and with this I stepped up to the garden-path, and the rector followed in silence.

"A fine old place, to my mind, ma'am, though it's rough and old fashioned," said our host, walking beside Ruth, and doing the honours. "But I've a right to say so. I was born in this house, and my father, and his father, and his grandfather, were born here before me. And our family has lived on the spot for two centuries, only the old house was burnt down, and the present one was built in my great-great-grandfather's time. But don't you fancy we belong to the gentry; we're only a good old yeoman stock —there isn't a better in the three nearest counties. And don't you fancy I am proud

of it. I'm no more proud of it, Mr. Garrett, than you are of your money. You use your fortune to buy up all the hearts in the village by the kindness you do with it. That's your way. So I use my good old English blood; I keep 'em in their place by it. Bless you, if I let go that hold over 'em, I haven't got another."

"Wouldn't it be better, sir," I said, "if you used it to show them how successive honest and industrious generations, without any chance helps of fortune, lift their family above the low level of its fellows?"

Mr. Herbert gave his good-humoured, coarse laugh.

"Let them find that out for themselves," said he. "If one does it, that's quite enough. I suppose my ancestor made it out for himself, and I'm glad his neighbours weren't enlightened on the matter. If they had kept pace with us, we should be no better off than if we had only kept pace with them!"

"But because your descent proves that honesty and industry may prosper apart from mere 'luck,'" I remarked, "it does not disprove that, in other cases, the will of God may set obstacles between the same qualities and success. Doubtless, if you review your family history, you will remember many instances where the well-being of the Herberts might have been damaged or destroyed, or at least hindered, by one of those commonplace misfortunes which happen every day to somebody. There are the M'Callums—high-principled people, who were prosperous after the frugal fashion of their country, and yet through no fault of their own, they were forced to forego all the advantages of old neighbourhood and ancient respectability, and to begin a struggle for bare existence under new conditions in a strange land——"

"There!" exclaimed Mr. Herbert, enthusiastically, slapping my shoulder, "that's

what I always say! Good blood, like good wine, needs no bush. It speaks for itself. I knew that Ewen was above the common. He never said so; because he knew if the mettle was in him, it would not need his recommendation. But he did his work, so that he never needed to be told that I was his master. I'm glad the yeoman blood is in him, sir. The best blood in the world. It made Great Britain what she is, sir."

The worthy farmer was evidently in happy ignorance of any difference between the Celtic and Saxon races, and I fear none of us was sufficiently well informed on the subject to care to begin his education in that particular.

"Well, so long as any blood, whether 'gentle' or simply 'good,' is never boasted, but quietly proved by deeds, the wildest Radical will scarcely complain," said Mr. Marten; "but certainly 'descent' is oftenest on the lips of those who themselves forget—

> 'Tis only noble to be good,
> Kind hearts are more than coronets,
> And simple faith than Norman blood.'"

"Pooh! who thinks anything of coronets?" interrupted Mr. Herbert. "How were many of them earned?"

"Anyhow, many were earned most honourably," I returned; "and their value is, that they should be a spur to incite their wearers to rival the sires who won them. A great and good ancestor is as much a gift of God as any other blessing."

"And if the descendant prove unworthy, he changes that blessing into a curse," said the rector.

"So he does," observed Mr. Herbert, with sudden gravity; "but, to tell you the truth, I hate to hear about 'degenerate families.' Let every respectable family be considered extinct on the death of its last worthy representative."

"But some people have strange notions of

worth," began Mr. Marten, but he was interrupted, for, as our host uttered his last dogma, Agnes joined us, entering the great dining-room by one door, as we reached it by another. She looked a little scared, just as she had done on my first visit to the Great Farm, and she glanced from one to another as if she wondered what we were talking about. Her entrance broke the conversation, and presently Mr. Marten introduced the subject of our previous discussion—the coloured window of St. Cross.

"I say, Mr. Garrett, can't you let well alone?" was the farmer's bluff query. "Any old thing is better than a new one, I'll engage."

"What is Miss Herbert's opinion?" asked the rector.

"I shall be sorry if it be taken away," she answered; "and yet I wish it had never been there."

"Thank you, my dear," I said; "that

is the strongest possible argument on my side of the case."

"Is it?" she queried, smiling. "I don't quite understand why."

"I do," said Mr. Marten.

And I think so did Ruth?

"Well, it does not matter to me what the window is," remarked Mr. Herbert; "so you can settle it how you like, for my part."

"But you will not destroy the old window, will you?" asked Agnes.

"No, my dear," I answered, "we will exchange it for another.

"Will that be right?" questioned the conscientious rector. "Should we offer another what we reject ourselves."

"Others may not be in our case," I replied. "In many churches there are several painted windows. In such our objection to this design does not hold good."

"Ah, I see that," assented Mr. Marten.

"Then what shall you have?" asked the farmer. "Your coat-of-arms, eh, Mr. Garrett?"

"Our family has never troubled the Heralds' College," I answered, drily, for I was rather affronted by his hint of self-glorification.

"I think heraldry out of place in churches," said the rector. "Need we take the most secular art on earth to adorn the House of God?"

"I don't quite agree with you," remarked Ruth. "An escutcheon is a family possession as much as a purse, and as a man may pour the one into God's treasury, so he may set up the other in God's temple, purely in the spirit of dedication—'I and my house, we will serve the Lord.'"

"True enough," responded Mr. Marten; "only I fear that spirit is somewhat scarce. But, at least, you do not think heraldry appropriate to a chancel window?"

"Certainly not," said Ruth.

"Do you think we shall have to order a window, Mr. Garrett?" inquired the rector.

"I don't think so," I answered. "St. Cross' window is by no means unusually large, and many of the London ecclesiastical warehouses have coloured glasses which can be made to fit it by using wider or narrower borders."

"And who is to survey these warehouses and make the selection?" asked Mr. Marten, rather blankly.

"You and I," I replied, laughing. "We will take the trip together."

"O dear," said he, "I wish I could get rid of the responsibility! What device do you think most suitable, Miss Garrett?"

"Well, certainly *not* two or three thin monks, each in a separate shrine, turning up his eyes, as if that promoted God's glory," returned my practical sister.

"Monks, Ruth?" I exclaimed. "I think

"you mistake. Surely they are intended for apostles?"

"If so, they are libels," she retorted. "Apostles indeed! The apostles were all honest working men, and what reason have we to suppose they were so foolish as to wear pink and blue trailing robes, with embroidered edges?"

"I think some incident from the life of our Saviour would be far better," I remarked.

"Not with the usual treatment," Ruth replied. "There is scarcely one picture taken from our Lord's life which is not a LIE. Can their smooth, pink, feminine faces give any idea of One who wrought hard work, and lived in sun and wind? Are their delicate draperies consistent with the fact that He had not where to lay His head?"

"But I suppose art must have some licence in these things," I observed. "You

see a painted window must be 'a thing of beauty.'"

"Truth first—and then as much beauty as you like," said Ruth.

"So say I," joined Mr. Herbert, heartily. "But that is not the fashion now-a-days, madam."

"But there are subjects which admit of beautiful form and colour without any clashing with facts," said the rector. "I know a splendid window with emblematical figures of Faith, Hope, and Charity."

"And I'll engage the artist has painted them so that the most worthless women who ever enter the church are most like them!" answered Ruth.

"I confess I prefer scriptural subjects for church windows," I remarked.

"Certainly, if they are so treated as to convey God's truth," responded my sister; "for then they may be as useful as the sermon."

"Do not the parables offer good subjects?" suggested Agnes, timidly.

"Yes, that they do," replied Ruth; "and as they are lessons which Christ set in stories, it does not seem inappropriate that we should set them in pictures. But they are not very common, are they, Edward?"

"I have seen them in some city churches, I believe," I answered. "In St. Stephen's, Walbrook, for instance."

"But I don't like any great figures in a window," said the rector. "One cannot see anything else. If you will recall any ancient cathedral, you will remember there is nothing obtrusive about its coloured windows. They warm the light, and rest the eye, but they never stare one out of countenance."

"Well, I daresay we could divide the St. Cross window into three parts," I said, "and about the centre of each part place a medal-

lion representing a striking parable, and then fill in the ground with minute and richly-coloured devices."

"And what parables shall you select?" asked Ruth.

"We must choose those which can best be illustrated," I answered. "I fear it would be hard to make the parable of 'The Labourers' tell its own story in a picture."

"Perhaps the 'Good Samaritan' will do for one," said Agnes.

"Yes," replied Mr. Marten, "and the 'Prodigal Son' for another."

By this time twilight had fallen, and Mr. Herbert started up so suddenly, that some suggestion which was on my lips vanished completely from my mind, and I could never afterwards recall it.

"I don't know why we're sitting in the dark," said he; "I'm getting quite sleepy, begging the company's pardon for saying

so. Ah, here comes Mrs. Irons with lights." And our worthy host stamped firmly down the long room, and closed the shutters of the end window with his own hands.

Meantime, Mrs. Irons advanced to the table, and set down a very handsome antique bronze lamp. Then she deliberately smoothed the table-cover, which did not really need smoothing, and at last inquired in her dry acid tones—

"Have you any orders, sir?"

"Now, you know all about it, Sarah," replied her bluff master; "only don't be long."

"I think we must say good-night, Ruth," I said, rising.

"No, you shan't," said the farmer, in his peremptory way; "there's some ham coming in presently. Sarah will spread supper in a minute, Miss Garrett. She wont keep you waiting. She's an invaluable woman. Been

in this house thirty years. Came here as my mother's maid. Found she liked the place, and concluded she would stay. Never was any danger of *her* sweethearts drinking up the ale in the kitchen. The only trouble she ever made was that she frightened all the men-servants away."

"Well, Mr. Herbert," observed Ruth, with some asperity, "considering what specimens of womankind one sees in the bonds of matrimony, nobody can suppose that any woman is *obliged* to remain single on account of any ugliness or even wickedness."

At this instant, Mrs. Irons, carrying the supper-tray, and followed by a young attendant damsel, entered the room. While the elder servant spread the cloth, the girl arranged five chairs about the table, and Mr. Herbert and his niece took their seats at either end. Mr. Marten chanced to overlook this arrangement, and so drew up his

own chair, and as Ruth and I sat down side by side, an empty seat remained between him and Agnes. When he perceived this he pointed to it, and said, laughingly—

"Look, Miss Herbert, the ghost's seat!"

He had scarcely uttered the words before I saw he wished he could recall them. And yet they seemed harmless enough. But Agnes' face quivered, and she glanced nervously at her uncle, while she gave the obnoxious chair a little ineffectual push. Mr. Herbert's face crimsoned, and he threw a fierce glance at the rector; it was only a flash—next instant he turned round on his chair, and shouted in a voice of thunder—

"Sarah, come back and take this——"

I think he was about to utter a word which our presence forbade, and, as he checked himself in that particular, he also paused in his command. He got up, and himself removed the chair, for Mr. Marten

sat perfectly still, as if afraid that any movement on his part would only make bad worse. Our host had scarcely returned to his seat, when the door opened, and the dry, sour voice, inquired—

"Did you call me, sir?"

"Yes, Sarah, I did," he answered, in quite a propitiatory tone; "but I made a mistake. Nothing is wanted, thank you, Mrs. Irons."

"Very well, sir," said the acid tones outside the door.

Our conversation never recovered that shock. We all left immediately after supper, and Mr. Marten walked home with us. Somehow, I guessed that he knew the secret of the Great Farm, but whether he kept silence because he supposed we knew it too, or because he had learned it in the course of his pastoral duty, in either case it behoved me to respect that silence.

CHAPTER VIII.

A VISIT TO LONDON.

HAVING once arrived at the conclusion that we must take a journey to London, Mr. Marten and I were not long in making the necessary arrangements. I wished Ruth to be of the party, but she would not "trouble us," as she called it, and so we were fain to go alone. And we started on the third morning after our visit to the Herberts, with nothing to take charge of except ourselves and a portmanteau, and two messages and one parcel, sent by Mr. M'Callum and Alice to Ewen.

Ruth drove with us to the railway station, and when I saw her standing on the platform as we were whirled away, it seemed

almost a revival of our old parting scene on Mallowe Common. But it was a revival with many improvements.

The rector had asked, "By which class shall we travel?" And it struck me that he would not have put this question had he not wished to go second-class himself. So I gave him the answer I thought he wanted. And as the day was fine and warm, I found our second-class carriage exceedingly comfortable, and could not help reflecting that such men as Shakspeare and Dante would have esteemed it the height of luxury to travel in a vehicle now despised by many a paltry dandy, who is only kept in the flesh by his father's allowance.

During the earlier part of our journey we had three fellow-passengers. When I enter a train or an omnibus, it often seems to me that I must have known my fellow-travellers in some former stage of existence, where I

unfortunately offended them. How otherwise can I account for the active animosity of the lady on my right, or the passive contempt of the gentleman opposite? Sometimes, during the course of a journey, I contrive to propitiate them, but generally it is not easy. Nevertheless, I always do my best. So, on this occasion, as there was a newspaper in the hands of one of our party, a red-faced, important person—one of those who always suggest the idea of an intimate relationship with our national grandmother in Threadneedle Street—I presently ventured to inquire if there were any important telegrams from a certain foreign country, upon which the whole world was then intently gazing.

"No, sir," he answered, suddenly lowering the crackling sheet, and confounding me with the Gorgon gaze of stony grey eyes; "no, sir, there is not." And then up again went the closely-printed page, and down

went my hopes of any reconciliation in that quarter.

Opposite sat a fair damsel of fifty, who seemed uneasy at finding herself the sole representative of her sex. I fear she thought I admired her, for I confess my eyes would wander in her direction, simply because I could not help wondering what she could possibly have been in her girlhood, and what she might eventually become before her career closed. I have heard of a great man, who would not seek an interview with an early love in her middle age, because he wished to preserve her youthful memory. I always thought that strange, a sacrifice of feeling to sentiment. But I don't wonder at it, if he had learned to associate middle-age with looks like that lady's. I think she had worn the bloom from her soul by fearing lest it was wearing from her face, and her spirits seemed quite exhausted by her vain contest with Time. I cannot think

why any should fear his touches, when once they feel them. They may shrink a little beforehand, for unknown change is always sad. As the white marble is fair, so is the smooth young brow; but even as the one is ennobled by the sculptor's chisel, so is the other by the tracings of a good life. There is a beauty of dimples, and a beauty of crow's feet. We may put summer fruit on our winter tables, as a surprise and a rarity, but we do not choose it for our Christmas dinner. For all things there is a season, and what is seasonable is best.

As for our third passenger, I can only describe him as a pair of checked trousers, one straw-coloured glove, a black frock coat, a little reddish hair, and a low-crowned hat. I never saw more of him. He looked out of window with the greatest assiduity. Perhaps he was shy. Perhaps he had been crossed in love. Perhaps he was in trouble. I shall never know. When our train stopped

at a certain station he slipped from the carriage. The stout gentleman gave a sonorous cough, got up, threw down his paper—it was the *Standard*—and also alighted. The lady half rose, and then sat down, and then rose again; but when Mr. Marten, kindly thinking to relieve her uncertainty, repeated the name of the station, she only answered with a freezing glance, and, gathering up a sea of fluffy frills and fringes, hastily quitted the carriage, leaving us alone.

As we moved on again, Mr. Marten pointed to the newspaper, and laughingly remarked—

"That good gentleman left his journal behind him as a present to you, that you may look over the telegrams for yourself."

"Very much obliged for the favour," I said, taking possession of it.

"I dare say he meant to vex you," observed my companion.

"Oh, I hope not," I replied, "and it does not matter if he did, as I am not vexed, but quite the contrary, for I had no time to read the news before I left home this morning."

I found one or two reviews, and sundry items of political interest, and our discussions over these beguiled our time until the broad horizon narrowed, and knots of trim villas betokened the outskirts of the great city. Then gradually the fields vanished, and soon the newly-planted trees of suburban gardens also disappeared, and the train dashed on its resolute way amid a forest of houses. On and on it went, cutting through the narrow unknown arteries of our giant London, and the houses crowded close upon its path and upon each other, for it was the dreadful East End, where space is valuable—more valuable than life! As we crossed the railway bridges we saw the people swarming like insects in the streets below. Through open windows, staring on

the dreary lines, we caught glimpses of sundry household arrangements, patchwork quilts, boiling kettles, and spread tables.

"Here every room is a home," I remarked.

"Don't say 'home,'" said Mr. Marten, dismally shaking his head.

"Yes, I will say 'home,'" I replied, "for more are homes than the reverse. The upper and middle classes are too prone to judge the very poor by what they read in the police reports. They have no reason to complain if, in return, the very poor judge them, as I fear they do, by the revelations of the Divorce Court. If you take up any commonplace aristocratic fiction, you are sure to find the conventional labourer, who gets drunk, beats his wife, and starves his children, and only exists to be converted by the angelic efforts of the young ladies from the Hall. And if you buy any of the badly-printed penny serials sold in the streets beneath us, you will be equally sure to find

the conventional nobleman, whose mansion is a very charnel house, and who deceives and seduces every girl he sees, until he is finally induced to abandon his wickedness that he may deserve the hand of some peerless village damsel, whose virtue has resisted force and fraud alike. Now, one picture is as true as the other, or rather as false. I readily grant that in real life there are more ill-conducted labourers than wicked lords, because there are more labourers than noblemen. But unfortunately each class judges the other by the bad specimens, which, like all evil weeds, come into undue prominence."

"I did not make my remark in any depreciation of the poor," observed the rector; "only it seems to me that to keep one's mind pure and healthy and heavenward amid influences such as these, must be so hard as to be nearly impossible."

"Mr. Marten," I said, "the modern school of sentimental philanthropists appear

to forget that when Christ gave his opinion on the subject, He said, 'How hardly shall *they that have riches* enter into the kingdom of God!' Do not think I deny that this wretchedness is an evil, but I believe it does more harm to the soul of the rich man who allows it to be endured, than to the soul of the poor man who must endure it."

Just then the train stopped; it was not yet the terminus, but only a little eastern station, where many of the third-class passengers alighted. Close behind the parapet rose a tall old house. Its wide, low garret window overlooked the end of the platform. At this window stood a young woman, trimming a laurel in a red pot. She was a pretty girl in a coarse linsey dress. Presently a young railway guard came down the platform whistling, and when he saw her he laughed and nodded, and then stopped, leaning over the parapet. They could easily exchange a few words, but they had to raise

their voices a little, and so I could hear what they said.

"Don't forget this evening, Maggie," said he.

"No, indeed," said she. "Shall you get away in time, Tom?"

"Oh, yes," he answered. "Mind you don't make it late, Maggie."

"Mind *you* don't," she retorted.

"All right," said he. And then our train moved on, and left the little idyl behind; and I looked at Mr. Marten, and smiled, and he smiled back again.

After that we were very soon at the terminus; and when we were walking down the platform who should we see alighting from another carriage but that fair damsel of fifty who had deserted us so early in our journey!

"She only changed carriages," I remarked to my companion. "So you see what she thought about us."

"Poor idiot!" said Mr. Marten.

"But I daresay we sometimes judge as unfairly," I added.

We took a cab, and drove to a comfortable old-fashioned hostelry in a quiet city close. There we dined, and after dinner, it being too late to begin our art expeditions for that day, Mr. Marten went off to the Temple to visit a college crony, and I took a leisurely walk to my old house of business by the churchless city grave-yard. But by the quiet which I observed stealing over the streets, I feared that I should be too late to find my friends there. So it proved. Principals and staff had alike departed, with the exception of the old head-clerk, who regularly made a point of being the last on the premises. I was a great favourite of his, and he always treated me with that quaint patronage which confidential servants often extend to their employers. He took me into the familiar counting-house where we

sat down and chatted. He was a little man, whose wiry grey hair had a tendency to stand upright, and he had a habit of touching his auditor's arm when he wished to give particular emphasis to his words. He did so when he told me that the firm had bought the good-will of Barwell Brothers, and had found it a highly profitable investment. He did so when he told me that the junior partner was about to marry the senior partner's daughter; and he did so when he spoke of Ewen M'Callum.

"A fine young man, sir," he said in his little precise tone. "Of course, I know all about him. Whatever is told to the firm is told to me, sir, which, of course, you understand, Mr. Garrett. So I'll own I suspected him at first, and I kept my eyes on him, but he had not been here a month before I saw that to pay him eighteen shillings a week was a sheer robbery on the part of the firm, sir. Now, I'm not one

for sudden advancement" (an emphatic touch), "but I talked it over with the principals, and we came to a conclusion. You remember we have on the premises, sir, a dinner-table for the boys—those young lads that get eight or nine shillings a week. Just plain joint and vegetables, sir. Yes, yes, you remember. We don't have it for the better-paid clerks, because they may prefer dining with their wives at home, and if they haven't got wives they can go to an ordinary, and suit themselves *exactly*. So we made Mr. M'Callum free of that dinner-table, which would make his eighteen shillings go a great deal further" (another touch). "He wrote home of the arrangements, did he, sir? Yes, yes, he's a grateful sort of lad. And no one could be jealous, for the others' wages are all much higher. And now I'll tell you a secret, sir. At Midsummer his salary will be raised to EIGHTY POUNDS A YEAR!" (a vigorous poke).

"I'm very glad to hear it," I said; "and as I must not keep you from your family any longer, I will bid you good-bye, and go and pay him a visit."

"But surely you will see something more of the firm while you are in London," observed the worthy man.

"Certainly," I answered, "I will be here as much as I possibly can, but the length of my stay is very uncertain."

So I took my departure. I knew where Ewen lodged, as he had written to us several times since Alice had delivered my sister's injunction. I got into an omnibus at the Bank, and rode to the "Angel," Islington, whence I soon found my way into the Liverpool Road. Ewen lived in a small cross street of humble but decent appearance. I soon found his number. There was a plate on the door announcing that the landlord was a tailor. The parlour window was screened by a respectable wire-blind, and had

old-fashioned wooden shutters outside. The establishment boasted both knocker and bell, and I chose the latter. Why need I alarm the quiet street and throw the good housewife into an unnecessary flutter?

A plump, pleasant-faced woman opened the door. "Yes, sir, he's at home," she answered to my inquiry for "Mr. M'Callum." "Will you step inside, sir; and what name shall I say?"

"Mr. Garrett," I replied, advancing into the passage. The landlady ran up-stairs, and I heard her open the door and announce me, and then Ewen's voice said, "Take the candle, please, for it must be quite dark on the stairs." But simultaneously there was a scuffle of feet, and a rush down the stairs, and a tall figure passed me in the dusk and went out at the front door.

"Will you step this way, sir?" cried the landlady's cheerful voice, as she held the light over the banisters. I obeyed, and

went up three flights of stairs. At the top Ewen welcomed me, took the candle from the woman, and led me into his room; and after our first greetings, and when I had repeated my message, and delivered his parcel, I found a moment's leisure to glance round it.

It was neither large nor small, and had two windows facing northward. It was clean and neat, but the furniture was singularly scanty. The floor was bare. In one corner stood a small, ascetic-looking bed, with a common deal washstand near it. The table was also deal; and there was only three chairs—two Windsor ones, and a cane arm-chair, in which Ewen had placed me. The rest of the furniture consisted of Ewen's box (on which lay a shabby portmanteau), a common looking-glass hung against the wall, and a homely set of book-shelves, with a decent array of worn books. I noticed a door beside the fire-place that I concluded

belonged to a cupboard. But the region about the mantel had a brightness which, by its contrast to the rest of the apartment, reminded me of the little decorated shrines one sees in Roman Catholic houses. There were three pictures hanging above it—two small ones unglazed, and one much larger, which boasted a very narrow frame. This one I could see was a head, but by the dim light of the solitary candle I could not distinguish more. The shelf itself was decorated by two plaster casts, and one or two bright bits of pottery, and at either end was a smart hand-screen. But there was a familiar look about the room which puzzled me. I had certainly never seen it before, nor could I recall anything like it, and yet it was not wholly strange. My observations were made in a minute, and then my eyes returned to my young host. Glancing at him as he stood in the centre of the room, I suddenly noticed that the two chairs

were both drawn up to the table, on which lay two heaps of papers, indicating the recent presence of two individuals. Then I remembered the apparition in the passage.

"I fear I have disturbed you," I said; "did not a friend of yours run away when he heard of my arrival? I saw some one go out."

Ewen laughed, and yet looked a little embarrassed.

"Oh, he is staying with me," he answered.

"But why did he run away?" I queried. "I should not have eaten him."

"He did not wish to intrude," said the young man, rather stiffly.

"But a pleasant companion never intrudes," I replied. "If you know where to find him, pray fetch him back."

Ewen paused, and mechanically turned over the leaves of an open book lying on

the table. Then he looked up, and said with hurried frankness—

"I must tell you at once, sir, that my friend is in such an unhappy state of mind, that he generally shuns seeing or being seen."

"I am sorry he did not make me an exception to the rule," I answered, "for I might help him in some way. I think you say he lives with you?"

"At present," Ewen replied. "You see, sir, I am out all day, and then he has the room entirely to himself."

"Doesn't he go to business?" I inquired.

"He is an artist," said Ewen.

"Oh, indeed," I responded, involuntarily glancing round the bare chamber.

"This room has the advantage of a north light," explained the young man, "and the landlady is very kind and attentive. Her husband is a Scotchman, and new to London. I heard from one of my fellow-clerks

that they let apartments. The rooms they showed me at first were nicely furnished and too expensive for me. But in the course of conversation they mentioned this attic, and said they did not wish to go to the expense of furnishing it just now. And presently they said if I could be satisfied with the furniture you see, they would let me have the room at a very low rent. And I have been here ever since."

"I see you stick to your art studies," I said, glancing at the etchings strewed about the table. "I suppose your artist-friend gives you a few hints."

"Yes, indeed he does," he replied; "some of his things are wonderfully beautiful."

"So are yours," I said.

Ewen smiled very sadly. "Mine are commonplace," he answered. "I always miss the idea in my mind. But I work and work and work upon them, and then they look elaborate, and so sometimes tempt the dealers

to buy, while they stupidly reject his brilliant sketches, with genius in every dash of the pencil."

I glanced at this young man, with his passionate brow and intense eyes, and it struck me that very likely the dealers were right. But I only said, "Genius goes but a little way without hard work."

"And hard work goes but a little way without genius," he answered, somewhat bitterly.

I looked at him again. He was certainly paler and thinner than formerly. His hands had lost the hue they had caught in his days of out-door work. His manner had always been good, not, as people say, for "what he was," but intrinsically good, despite a little shy embarrassment; yet now he had gained an air which caused me to suspect that his companion was not without polish. But I also noticed that he looked much older, and like one who has passed

through a severe moral struggle, where self-conquest was not gained without sharp suffering. I thought surely this is not merely the trace of his artistic aspirations. And yet I knew that genius, before it understands itself, is often like that dumb spirit in the Scripture, which tore and wore its unhappy owner. So I said cheerfully, "And your genius, my boy, combined with your hard work, will go a very long way. And when you are at the top of the tree, don't forget that I said so, but give me credit as a good prophet and a wiseacre."

He smiled a little more brightly.

"But I hope you do not forget rest and exercise," I added; "I need not hope you don't neglect business, for I have just heard your praises sounded at the counting-house."

"I think I give satisfaction there," he answered, meekly, "and I never sit up late, and I take two long walks regularly every

week; I should not do justice to my work if I neglected those things."

"And yet you get through much drawing," I remarked.

"I could not live without it now," he exclaimed, with startling enthusiasm.

Then it had come to this! The spell was on him, whether for good or for evil. "My boy," I said, gently, "would you like to devote yourself wholly to art?"

"No," he replied, slowly and firmly; "but I suppose if I were a genius, I should. And yet Milton did not live on 'Paradise Lost,' and Shakspeare made his fortune from his playhouse and not from his plays. And I'd rather get my bread like other people."

"Your friend does not think thus," I said.

"He did not think so," he answered, "but it would have been better for him, and for every one concerned, if he had."

I looked again at Ewen, for there was an undefinable something about him which filled me with wonder. He had certainly grown much older than the lapse of five months warranted, but it was not only that.

"Your friend is not in trouble?" I queried.

"Not now," he said.

"And you are in no trouble?" I whispered, softly.

"Why, what makes you say such a thing, sir?" he questioned in return, turning on me his old smile, which yet had a new solemnity that gave pathos to its brightness. "There ought not to be a happier man in London, sir, thanks to you."

"Thanks to God," I said—and I said no more; for, of all the delicate tortures which society tolerates, there are few more cruel than such remarks as, "You seem sad to-day," or, "You look ill." If mistaken, they annoy; if true, they sting.

After a little more conversation we parted. I would not promise another visit, for I scarcely knew what my plans would be. Yet, in my own mind, I felt sure that I should not leave the city without seeing Ewen again.

CHAPTER IX.

MR. RALPH.

In the morning, Mr. Marten and I went off to one of the most celebrated ecclesiastical warehouses. I had not been in such a place since my boyhood, when I had carried a message from my good old master, relative to some simple piece of church furniture which he had ordered for the use of his parish church. I found the house much enlarged. In the old-fashioned days of my youth the garments of the sanctuary were so plain and so universal that they needed no display, but orders for them were quietly received at a desk, and the only matter for consideration was the precise quality of the silk or linen. But now a plate-glass window

was stocked with clerical finery. Upon a dummy, like those in mercers' windows, stood a surplice with a cross embroidered on the collar, and over it was thrown a hood ostentatiously displaying the "Oxford" colours. We passed through this department, and then we were shown into another, where we were detained some time, until the assistant who attended the sales of coloured glass was at liberty to wait upon us. In this place I should have been fairly confounded but for the rector's explanations. I did not even know the names of the things about me, and when I learned them from the shopmen I was no wiser, until Mr. Marten gave me the plain English for such words as "lectern" and "faldstool," "credence" and "piscina," and taught me that an "eagle" might be a reading-desk, and a "corporal" a cloth, and not a soldier!

"But it seems to me all rank folly," I said; "and I cannot understand how any

sane man can upset the unity of the Church for such rubbish."

"To those who do so it is not such folly as it seems to you," answered the rector. "In their eyes these things symbolize certain doctrines. For instance, that cloth which they choose to call a *corporal* is used to cover the bread at the Lord's Supper. Its name is plainly derived from the Latin *corpus*, or body,—a subtle introduction of that doctrine of transubstantiation which changes our Feast of *remembrance* into a *sacrifice*. Admitting the idea of sacrifice, an altar is needed, and where there is an altar there must be, not a simple ministry like that of the apostles, but a priesthood clothed with the mystic dignity and terrible powers of spiritual privilege, and able to brand with the sin of schism any who venture to expose its duplicity, or who dare to defy its encroachments."

"I don't think I could argue about it at

all," I said; "I can only say this doesn't seem like the New Testament."

"It is not, it is not," responded the rector, warmly. "It is a retreat from light into darkness—from realities into shadows—from the Sermon on the Mount to the rules for building the tabernacle. And when and where will it end?" he added, mournfully.

"It will end in God's good time and place," I answered; "and meanwhile, out of evil He can bring some good. Just now, let it stir our zeal to make His house a pleasant place, without turning His service into a mummery."

And so we went on to look at the glasses.

We were shown many specimens of that false and monkish art of which Ruth had spoken. We were assured that it was "admired," and "popular," and "devotional" (strange connexion of words!). We asked if they had no illustrations of the

parables or miracles, and, with a sigh for our bad taste, our attendant owned they had; but they were not new, having been removed from a church about to be *restored*. They were shown us, and proved appropriate in shape. But as they were too large to admit of three in the St. Cross window, we instantly decided on the Prodigal Son and the Good Samaritan, with a neat medallion representing an open Bible, for the centre of the triangular top of the window. A small device for the groundwork, and a richly-coloured border for the whole, were very easily selected, and so, having made all due arrangements, we left the warehouse and strolled leisurely back to our hotel.

Of course, we looked at the shops; now it is natural for every one to look at pictures and books, and occasionally, according to one's sex, at cravats or bonnets. Also it is pleasant to behold beautiful house-furniture, such as carved sideboards, inlaid cabinets,

and stately mirrors. But what possessed Mr. Marten to pull me up in front of a painted, cane-bottomed chair, bearing a label, "36s. a dozen," while he remarked, "That seems cheap; doesn't it, Mr. Garrett? A dozen chairs go a long way in bedrooms." And a few minutes after, when I was admiring some photographs, and turned to call his attention to their beauty, I found he had wandered away to a china-shop, where he was gravely weighing the comparative merits of tea-sets, respectively priced "£1 1s." and "£1 5s." And at last, when he actually stopped to feel the thickness of some very cheap drugget, I slily said, "'Come, come, Mr. Marten, we old bachelors need not trouble ourselves about such things." And he answered hastily, "Oh no," and hurried on.

Having brought our business to a satisfactory conclusion, we agreed to return to Upper Mallowe by the next day's early train.

I felt that my few remaining hours in London were due to my old City friends, and as Mr. Marten had many acquaintances of his own to whom he must show attention, I went alone to the counting-house by the church-yard, and saw the whole array of familiar faces, among whom so many years of my life had passed. Of course I saw Ewen, but only as one of the crowd. I went home with the senior partner, and dined at his house in Highbury Crescent, and spent a very pleasant evening, for every one was exceedingly kind. Nevertheless, I left before nine o'clock, and took a cab to the corner of a certain quiet street in the Liverpool Road.

The old-fashioned parlour-shutters were closed, and but for a light in the passage, the whole front of the house was dark. The same cheerful woman opened the door, and instantly recognising me, invited me to enter with a cheerful "Good evening, sir.

Will you please to walk up-stairs? Mr. M'Callum is at home."

I knocked at Ewen's door, and a voice, not his, cried, "Come in." So I entered. There were two figures seated at the table, with a solitary candle between them. Ewen had his back towards me, and when he heard my voice, he started up, glanced nervously at his companion, and hurried forward to offer me a seat in the cane arm-chair. I saw he was drawing. The stranger was reading. At first he did not look up, but while Ewen and I carried on that desultory chat which distinguishes unexpected visits, I found that he turned from his book, and regarded me with a curious scrutiny.

He was quite a young man, of not more than five or six and twenty. His face was remarkably pale, but his features were handsome, though a little worn for his time of life. I did not notice the details of his attire, but he had an elegant appearance,

and his hands were white, and singularly fine in form. At first, I thought he was a little uneasy, though he only showed it by a statue-like stillness, scarcely seeming even to breathe. But after his eyes had twice or thrice met mine, this passed away, and presently he made some casual remark which fell in with the course of our conversation.

By-and-by Ewen quitted the room. I concluded he went to instruct his landlady to prepare some little hospitality. For a few minutes I and the stranger were silent. Then, thinking I must not lose so good an opportunity, I observed—

"It gives me much pleasure to make the acquaintance of a young artist of whose talents my friend speaks so warmly, though I do not think he has ever chanced to mention your name——"

"Ralph—Mr. Ralph," he interrupted with a graceful bow; "and I feel it a great honour to introduce myself to you, sir," he

added hastily, with a strange emotion; "for I, too, have heard and—and heard again of the goodness of Mr. Garrett."

"Ah, but you must not trust Ewen for my character," I said, smiling, "for I fear he exaggerates—yes, he certainly exaggerates."

At this instant Ewen returned, followed by a servant girl with a little supper. It was a very simple repast, but it was quite a treat to me, carrying me back to the distant days when I gave such feasts to my few visitors, the dear friends of my youth, who are now all nearer God.

Our conversation during supper was not very brisk. Mr. Ralph was decidedly taciturn, like one who does not care to conceal that his mind is not with his company. But this seemed an unconscious habit on his part, and perhaps arose from too much solitude. Whenever he spoke he was agreeable, though his words sometimes left an uncomfortable impression. Once or twice

he was merry, and his mirth was saddest of all. It was as if a man, pursued by a relentless fate, from which he felt himself too weak to escape, recklessly turned and smiled in her direful face. I could not understand the intimacy between him and Ewen. It was evidently of the closest nature: no casual fellowship, entered into from community of tastes or motives of mere financial economy. Yet I could not pass an hour with these two young men without observing a great disparity between their natures. But there seemed a bond between them stronger than any difference of character, and firm enough to resist all change of circumstance. Their manner towards each other had none of the gushing enthusiasm of hastily warm friendships, but rather the quiet, settled confidence one notices between brothers, old school-fellows, or tried comrades in war or travel.

"And did you two make acquaintance in

London?" I found opportunity to inquire in the course of conversation.

"Oh, we knew each other a long time ago," said Mr. Ralph. "Will you pass the ale, M'Callum?"

"School-fellows, perhaps?" I suggested, remembering that Ewen's early education had been received among lads of the apparent position of his companion.

"No; our acquaintance was of a very casual kind," he returned; "but one greets a familiar face when one has been lost in London. — A little more cheese, please, Ewen?"

So I understood that the subject was to drop.

"I suppose you will ride home, sir?" remarked young M'Callum, when I rose to go.

"I don't think so," I answered, looking from the window. "This is a bright moon, and the streets are clear and quiet now."

"May I come with you?" said Mr. Ralph. "I shall so enjoy the walk."

"Shall I come too?" queried Ewen, as if consulting his friend's pleasure.

"No, my boy," returned the other; "you have to rise early and march off to business. You go to bed, and to sleep. I will see Mr. Garrett safely to his hotel."

After receiving Ewen's home messages, we started off together. My companion offered me his arm. He had a fine, tall figure, and altogether what one calls "a good presence."

"What solemn grandeur hangs over London by night!" I said, as we walked through the moonlit streets. "Are you a native of the city, Mr. Ralph, or did you come here to try your fortune?"

"I came here to set the Thames on fire," he answered with a light laugh. "And the Thames extinguished me!"

"Ah," I said, "London is the best place

to teach a man his measure. A good lesson, Mr. Ralph, and one that is never learned too soon."

"I don't know that," he retorted, laughing again. "'When ignorance is bliss, 'tis folly to be wise.'"

"But when is ignorance bliss?" I asked.

"When knowledge comes too late," he replied.

"And when does knowledge come too late?" I queried.

"When you've done what you can't undo," said he, shortly.

"Then at least you can repent it," I observed. "It is never too late for that. If one's life is ruined, one's soul need not be lost."

"But when one has done all the harm one can," he answered, gloomily, "it seems mere gross selfishness to try pushing into heaven at last!"

There was a something in his tone which chilled me as he uttered these dreadful words. Dreadful indeed they were—the very utterance of despair. They revealed a perilous nature, one that would slide down and down, and then use its most loveable instincts to excuse its never rising and struggling upward. He could actually see selfishness in seeking salvation! Well, perhaps his error was not worse than one much more common, when men fancy they have forsaken evil because they are simply sick of it. I tried to fight him with his own weapons.

"But whatever harm one has done," I observed, "he does a greater harm when he finally leaves his soul to destruction."

"Harm to himself or to others?" he inquired, laconically.

"One cannot harm one's-self without harming others," I answered. "'Nobody's enemy but his own,' is a false saying. By

benefiting others one benefits one's-self, and by hurting one's-self one hurts others."

"Then goodness is pure selfishness," said he.

"Each has two selves," I explained in answer: "a lower self and a higher self, a temporary self and an eternal self. Each must serve one or the other. By solely seeking the gratification of one's lower and mortal part, one does harm in the world, and neglects one's own best interests. By following the dictates of one's nobler and immortal part, one does good in the world, and makes it a school of preparation for heaven."

"I can believe that," said Mr. Ralph, gently, "because I have seen it."

"Now supposing that you were in the case we have in point," I went on; "supposing that you had done as much harm as you could, and had caused much sin, and suffering, and sorrow—that is, if you will

grant me the liberty of such an illustration?——"

"Oh, certainly," said he, with a laugh.

"Then do you not feel that the very fear lest your soul was lost at last would cause more suffering, and more sorrow, and possibly more sin?" I asked.

"Well, I think it might," he answered, nervously lifting his hat from his head;—"yes, it would: there's one or two that it would grieve, and there's one who'd say it was only what he expected."

"Then, if you left no reasonable cause for such fear, and so gave happiness to those who love you, and also taught your enemy more charity in future, would not you serve yourself and others at the same time?"

He did not reply; but walked by my side in silence. I felt I was carrying on the discussion at a great disadvantage; because I did not say that if it chanced there were none on earth who cared whether he went to God or

to Satan, there was still One in heaven whom his absence would grieve, because it would show that he refused the salvation which He had purchased with a great price—even His own blood. And I dared not say this; because I was sure that my companion was as well-informed in the mere theology of the matter as myself. And the formal repetition of a fact whose truth can only be *felt*, dees no good—nay, it may disgust, by seeming but the easy parade of a glib lip-religion.

At last he spoke suddenly.

"Wandering a little from our subject," he said, "do you think that if a man makes some great self-sacrifices, he does not lose in the end?"

"If he do it for his neighbour's good or God's glory, I am sure he does not," I replied. "But he cannot make the sacrifice in this feeling. If he could, it would lose the very nature of sacrifice. And, besides,

God's compensations are seldom such as man in his mortality can appreciate. If one resigned his worldly prospects for the sake of another, God might recompense him by an early call to Himself. But till he was fairly within the veil, the touch of death would seem rather his Maker's chastening rod, than his loving Father's benediction."

"Do you—do you think it is right to allow another to make great sacrifices for one's own sake?" he asked, with a broken voice and with averted face.

"It depends upon circumstances," I answered, gently, for I felt I was walking blindfold over the youth's own history; "but I should not refuse a friend's sacrifice merely because it was greater than I could ever make in return. Why should I grudge him a brighter heavenly crown than mine? Only I should take care his goodness was not for nought. And, Mr. Ralph, if ever a great sacrifice be made in our behalf, let it

stand in our hearts as a type of His ove who left His Father's throne for our sakes! Let the human affection interpret the Divine love, and don't waste either."

The young man turned and looked at me —not with the face which he carried to the galleries and the picture dealers, but with the look which he surely had worn when he said "Our Father" at his mother's knee, years before;—a look which might return and remain for eternity, if his eyes met the eyes of a good woman who loved him. The reckless prodigal laugh was silent; the cynical artist sneer was gone; the man's angel was in his countenance—the same angel that had once been in the innocent child's face—only with the pathetic look of its long struggle with the reckless prodigal and the cynic artist. And God had marked that angel all the time, and He would watch it to the very end! It is because He is All-seeing that He is All-loving.

And then we walked in silence for the length of many streets, until at last we reached that leading to my hotel. There we shook hands; and in our parting I made some simple remark in praise of Ewen M'Callum.

"Yes, yes," he answered, with singular fervour, "all you say is true; but you don't know him as I do, that's all, Mr. Garrett."

And so saying, he hurried off.

When I entered my sleeping-room, I found a note from Mr. Marten, intimating that a telegram had followed him from Upper Mallowe to London, urging him to hasten to Cambridge, to the dying bed of a young relative, a student there. He had received this on reaching the hotel during my absence, and in compliance with its entreaty he had started off immediately.

So my homeward journey was a solitary one.

CHAPTER X.

A NEW IDEA.

I WAS very glad to find myself again in my quiet village home. My little trip to London gave us some new topics of conversation, and my sister was much interested in my account of young M'Callum and his friend. But she took a prejudice against the latter, and hazarded the uncharitable conjecture that he was "no good." When she saw Alice she threw out hints to this effect, which Alice received very quietly, and without any reply.

Mr. Marten's young relation did not die, but his convalescence was tedious and unsatisfactory, and as he had no other friend to attend him, our rector's absence from

his parish proved a long one. A neighbouring clergyman came to us on Sundays, and gave us two sermons in the Refuge. But Mr. Marten was at liberty by the time the church repairs were complete.

St. Cross was re-opened on the second Sunday in July. The weather was—just beautiful English summer—I can find no better words for it. Ruth and I set out at the first summons of the new peal of bells, which were among our improvements. I believe in church bells, simple, soft, and sweet,—a sound meet to echo in the sacred memories of childhood's Sabbath. If once linked with feelings of holy happiness, theirs is a voice which may speak where the preacher cannot come, and where the Bible is shut. And praised be God, they now sound so widely over the world, that few can wander out of their reach.

When we arrived at St. Cross, I was quite satisfied with the effect of our alte-

rations, which, though sufficiently familiar to me while in process, I now saw for the first time tested by usage. The narrow path was widened and gravelled, and many evergreens and some flowers were planted about the graves. The porch was much enlarged, and the inner doors stood wide open. But it was the interior which was most changed. All the windows were widened, which destroyed the monotony of the white wall, and their opaque glass was exchanged for small clear panes, with one large coloured pane, bearing some appropriate device, in the centre of each window. Two new windows, containing more coloured glass, were opened north and south of the communion table, thus brightening a portion of the building which had formerly been both dismal and ill-ventilated. The table itself was entirely refitted, and the candlesticks were gone,—into the vestry! The tables of the law were re-written in

legible characters, and over one was a scroll bearing a verse from the 103rd Psalm, "Like as a father pitieth his children, so the Lord pitieth them that fear Him;" and over the other was another inscribed with our Saviour's words, "Take my yoke upon you and learn of me: for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls."

But *the* change was certainly the new chancel window. As the worshippers entered, one by one, or in groups, their eyes instantly fell on it, and each countenance brightened. Old Mr. M'Callum, with his daughter, and George Wilmot, were among the earliest arrivals. Bessie Saunders came soon afterwards, and presently Mr. Herbert and Agnes. And just before service commenced, Mr. Weston arrived, rather flushed, and in such a twitter that he did not notice the attendant who trotted forward to show him a pew, but precipitately took refuge in

the M'Callums' seat, where presently he became quite at home.

The service was conducted in a very simple, spirited way, and Mr. Marten's sermon did not attempt to "improve the occasion." Our young rector had sufficient judgment to conclude that "occasions" have a voice sufficiently eloquent to plead for themselves. And his sermon was very short, but full of those pithy truths which stick in the mind like arrows, and are not easily shaken out.

When all was over, the congregation was in no hurry to disperse. Some stayed to speak to others about the new window, and a few old people, whose sight was dim, drew nearer to the chancel to read the text written above the table.

Mr. Marten himself very speedily reappeared from the vestry, and it was then I first noticed that Lieutenant Blake and his daughter were that day among the wor-

shippers at St. Cross. He walked off with them, and as I stood in the churchyard speaking to Mr. Herbert, I saw the three pause to examine the skeleton of the house now rapidly rising behind the church, and in front of it Miss Blake turned and gazed around, and made some remark. I fancy she said it had a very fine prospect.

"Well, my brother," said Ruth, as we sat down to our dinner that day, "you have certainly done *one* good work for Upper Mallowe."

"Yes, and only one," I answered, "for the Refuge is yours."

"Mine!" she ejaculated, "when all I gave was a few household things."

"You gave the thought," I said. "'The liberal deviseth liberal things.'"

"And I suppose the Lord will accept a plan, if it's all one can do," she replied; "and I have no money to give until I die, for as God prospered me just sufficiently to

be independent, please God I'll never be dependent—even on you!"

"But you should not call even the church repairs my work," I said presently. "You must not forget that the village has been so liberal, that my share of the expense will not exceed a tolerably moderate subscription."

"But then, if I gave the scheme for the Refuge," she answered, "you gave the scheme for the church, and you led the way, and took all the responsibility, whether it might prove great or small."

"Yes, I'll own that," I conceded; "I do so little good that I'll willingly acknowledge all I can."

"Now, I'll tell you what, Edward," said my sister, in that business-like tone which always means something; "you've fairly started the Refuge, and in my will they'll find a little endowment, which with the annual subscriptions will carry it safely on. And in the Refuge, I include the Orphan-

home, which will cost very little, when once the additional rooms are made. So now I'll give you something else to do. Establish a village hospital, sir!"

"A village hospital!" I echoed, rather startled.

"Yes," she answered, "what provision have our people in sickness? The very poor are dragged off to Hopleigh workhouse infirmary. Should you like to go there if you were ill? The class a little better off are taken to the hospital in the county town, at great expense of time and money and strength just when they are all most valuable. You give ten pounds a year to that hospital. That ten pounds would be worth at least twenty, if you kept it in Upper Mallowe. And there would be no tedious recoveries, hindered by home-sickness, and no more deaths among strange faces."

"But don't you think the establishment of even a village hospital will be a somewhat

complicated matter?" I ventured to inquire.

"No," she answered, decisively; "a country home for the sick is as different from a city hospital as Upper Mallowe is from London. We shan't want six or eight wards, but about as many rooms. We shan't want a secretary, and a staff of Sisters of St. Something or another, but just one experienced God-fearing woman, with two or three young girls between sixteen and eighteen years of age under her."

"Ah," I said, "I begin to see the possibility and the beauty of your plan, Ruth. Why it may do great good in more ways than one!"

"With God's blessing, it certainly will," she answered. "At the present time, I know of a nice house standing empty. It is a detached cottage on the lonely side of the green, and it has eight well-sized and airy rooms. It may be either rented or

sold, but it is dearer than the Refuge was."

"I'll buy it, nevertheless," I said.

"Yes, you can certainly afford that," returned my plain-speaking sister, "and then it will need serviceable, suitable furniture, and there must be maintenance and salary for the matron——"

"You mean the head nurse," I interrupted.

"Call her by the wise German name of 'housemother,'" my sister went on,—"that includes all her duties; then there will be maintenance for the sick, and medical attendance. I think that is all the outgoing. And the income will include subscriptions, the interest from your endowment, for I must leave that matter to you, my brother, and small weekly payments from the girls who assist the house-mother."

"Weekly payments *from* the girls?" I queried.

"Certainly," she answered. "It will be an excellent preparation for all branches of domestic life. Any lady interested in a young girl, or the girl's own parents, ought readily to give enough to purchase her victuals in exchange for such advantages. House-room and instruction will be gratuitous."

"But will one nurse and two or three girls be sufficient for the work?" I asked, dubiously.

"Except during epidemics," she answered, "and then funds for more aid will not be lacking. What is the average number of hospital cases in this little village at one time? Seldom more than five or six, and three or four of those not at all serious."

"But will people have confidence in such a homely affair?" I asked.

"Perhaps they'll laugh at it while they're in health," she promptly replied, "but when

the head is sick and the heart is faint, there's nothing very reassuring in a line of pallets, and a long row of windows, and a gaunt white woman coolly naming one with a number. *Then* one longs for a roughly plastered room, with the trees whispering outside, and familiar faces smiling within. *Then* they'll come to us, and please God, they'll never laugh at us afterwards!"

"But who shall we choose for the housemother?" I inquired. "Alice has little nursing experience, and she is too young: besides, the Refuge cannot spare her."

"The Refuge will lose her soon enough," said Ruth, significantly, "and then we shall find it tolerably hard to supply her place."

"If Miss Sanders would like to become principal of our hospital," I observed, "surely she would suit it admirably. She is clear-headed and kind-hearted, and

only God can fathom the depth of her patience."

"But what can we do with her sweet sister?" asked Ruth, with a wry face.

"We must get her a situation," I said.

"Ay, but will she keep it?" queried my sister. "If I wanted a servant, I would not have her, even without wages. I would sooner pension her."

"Then if the worst comes to the worst, we must pension her," I answered.

"A fine reward for idleness!" exclaimed Ruth, indignantly. "Very just towards poor Bessie!"

"Do you suppose Bessie would like us to pension *her?*" I asked, slily.

"Ah, well, I'll own she would not," conceded my sister, "and I doubt if she'd not carry her independence as far as to resent our doing as much for the lovely Anne."

"Nevertheless, if we get Bessie to like our hospital scheme," I said, "we will manage the rest *somehow*."

"Yes, somehow," assented Ruth.

Nothing more was said on the subject until Monday morning, when my sister, steadily true to her old principle of striking the iron while it was hot, took me first to see the empty cottage, and then to visit Miss Sanders. Bessie's face brightened softly as we unfolded our plan, though her words were simple and cool enough. "Yes, she should like it very much, but—Anne?"

"Make her a present of your business," said Ruth.

The dressmaker shook her head.

"Let her sell it to some young woman, and remain here as housekeeper," was my sister's next suggestion.

Miss Bessie smiled dimly, and shook her head again.

"At least try that experiment," I said;

"it will certainly do no harm. We can but make some other arrangement if she do not suit the in-comer."

She reflected a few minutes, and then said, "It can do no harm. I beg pardon for being so slow, but the thought of a change rather confuses me. But—but I must speak to Anne before anything is decided."

She went to the door, and called her sister's name. It was but her proud determination to put the best possible appearance on her unhappy family-life.

Anne presently answered the summons. She entered, with a grimy face, and a dress representing the fashion of by-gone years. Ruth told our errand in a few clear words.

"You need not have asked me, Bessie," said she, turning to her sister. "Why should you consider *me?* Do what you think best for *yourself*, and I hope you will

never repent it, but that you will be quite comfortable *at last*. Don't think of me at all," she added, turning to us, "anything will do for me. Some respectable young person will take Bessie's place, and I'll wait on her. I don't mind drudging *all day*. I'll do anything to please any one. I don't mind how I turn about. Since I'm only fit for mean work, I'll not make myself above it."

"No work is mean," said Ruth, rather fiercely, taking up her old argument, "except to a mean mind; and a mean mind makes everything mean."

"Well, I'm very glad you agree with our plans," I observed, rising, for I foresaw a useless tournament between Anne and my sister; "we shall press our work forward as much as we can, so prepare as quickly as possible for your approaching separation. Shall you bring away any of this furniture, Miss Sanders?" I asked.

"Only two or three little things which belong to me personally," she answered. She evidently desired to give Anne every advantage.

"Ah, that will do," I said; "we will provide all the rest. By the way," I added, when we were in the passage, and out of Anne's hearing, "I have not visited you since Mr. Marten and I brought you that sad relic of your poor cousin. I suppose no new thought has struck you in connexion with that affair?"

"No, sir," she answered, "and I suppose you have not seen young M'Callum yet, to tell him about the knife?"

"I have seen him," I replied. "I went to London for a day or two, and I saw him there. But I told him nothing. It struck me that he was not very well, and I thought it best he should not hear of it, till his own people told him in his own home. I hope

you are not angry with my consideration, Miss Sanders."

"Oh, sir," she replied, "if every one considered others as you do, it would be a blessed world!" (Remember, my readers, that she measured my consideration only by her sister's, which was nothing at all.)

And so Ruth and I walked homeward.

"Our scheme is ripening fast," I remarked.

"Edward," said she, shortly, "I'm in a bad temper!"

"Indeed!" I exclaimed, "I am sorry for that."

"I daresay you are!" she said, "but that does no good. I'll always say that I'm selfish, and that I don't care for anybody but myself, and that I will have my own way! I'll do anything to be different from that Anne Sanders! No woman has provoked me as much since Laura Carewe. I'm in a regular passion. I feel as if I wanted to kick!"

I knew that at that instant no words of mine would soothe my sister's ire, so I walked by her side in silence.

"And you never told me that you did not think Ewen was well!" she added presently, with no abatement of asperity; "you leave me to find that out for myself. You come home from London and say nothing about it to Alice or me. Can I be sure you are not reserving something else? I've a great mind to go to London and see him for myself."

"My dear Ruth," I expostulated, "I said nothing because I thought it might be only my own imagination. He will have his holidays in a few weeks. So why should I trouble you or his sister? He would not like a fuss over a trifling ailment or a passing depression."

"You'd have made fuss enough had it been Agnes Herbert," said my sister, wrathfully. "You're always noticing whether

she looks unhappy or no—though depend on it she has nothing at all to trouble her except some fine fantastical sentimentality of her own. But women always get all the sympathy. They are the porcelain of humanity, of course, with all their delicate dandelion virtues which blow away at the first breath of every-day air!"

"Is that your description of Alice M'Callum and Bessie Sanders?" I asked, gently.

I knew Ruth heard the question, but she did not heed it, and presently started off on a new tack, with—

"As I said directly I heard of him, you may depend upon it that new friend of Ewen's is no good. Some idle daundering good-for-nought" (when Ruth was excited she often used the graphic diction of the country-side) "who takes no trouble for himself, but just lives to trouble honest people. Talk about vampires! I believe in them. There are people who put all their self-made

sufferings to suck the very life from other people, and never feel their sting themselves. Oh, well I remember your description of him, just a personification of your Childe Harolds and your Corsairs, and all your other rubbish, who might easily make a good riddance of themselves and their miseries, and not be afraid the world would stop without them!"

By this time we had reached home, and Ruth stepped off to her bedroom, while I went dismally into the parlour, marvelling at the mysterious influence which some natures possess of souring whoever comes near them, even as others always sweeten. The scolding Ruth had given me was all due to her glimpse of Anne Sanders. I knew that well enough.

In about ten minutes my sister reappeared. I had taken refuge behind the outspread newspaper. But she came up to me and put her hand on my shoulder. I looked up, and she laughed rather dolefully.

"The fit is over," she said, "and I'm sorry for the words I said. I'm afraid some of them are true. But I'm just as sorry I said them. Some women have hysterics and some have tempers!"

CHAPTER XI.

THE RIGHT OF REFUSAL.

Ruth proceeded very energetically with her hospital plans. She wished the house to be in readiness in case of any visitation of those sicknesses so often attendant on early or late autumn. Agnes Herbert was again her helper, in happy ignorance of the ruthless words which my sister had spoken in her anger, but for which Ruth strove to atone by extraordinary kindness and complacency. Very industriously the two worked and consulted together, with Bessie Sanders for an occasional third. Bessie sold her business very easily, for it was in good repute. So she took up her abode in the little hospital, and found plenty of occupation in putting

up the furniture and preparing the house-linen.

Meanwhile, the Refuge was in full vigour. Harvest operations had brought down the usual crowd of needy, unskilled labourers, who gladly took shelter there until they procured work. I liked to wander in the fields at their dinner hour, and have a chat about their winter life in London, and hear what they thought of their temporary home in our High Street. They did not know me, or my connexion therewith, and so I knew I should get the truth, and might obtain some useful hints for the future. But had they known who I was, I should certainly have suspected them of insincerity, for there was nothing but praise. Many a hearty Irish blessing did I hear bestowed on Alice M'Callum, "the purty girleen, with the face like the Holy Virgin's in the picture over the altar"—the out-spoken women adding, "We guess she wont be at the Re-

fuge when we come again this time next year. Sure there is a big house down the hill with no want of anything, where she would be kindly welcome, for we have eyes in our heads, and we know what we know; and the ould gintleman will find it a lonely life without her. Heaven's blessing light on the both of them!"

Both Mr. M'Callum and his granddaughter were eagerly looking forward to Ewen's holidays. Through the exigencies of business, these were rather later than had been expected, but Alice bore the delay very patiently, feeling that she would have more time to enjoy her brother's society when harvest was over, and the Refuge restored to its ordinary condition. Ewen's letters came regularly, both to the Refuge and to our house. Very nice letters they were—written in his close, neat, rather peculiar calligraphy—simply worded, half boyish and half manly in their tone. They had no fine

sentences—nothing that any one would care to read but those who knew and loved him. But then to such there was a strange sacredness about these simple letters. One could not bring oneself to destroy them. I kept all he sent me. They are in my desk now. Alice stored hers in her workbox. And you, too, my reader, have some such letters stored somewhere, though your fire may have devoured many clever ones, and perhaps even some with "autographs."

I must say that the medical man of Upper Mallowe entered very warmly into the interests of our little hospital. He was a young married man with a scattered, poor practice, and when he named a very modest sum as the annual price for his professional services at our sick home, I knew there was more real charity in the business-like agreement than in many a magnificent donation; and I think Ruth felt the same, for she sought his advice and concurrence in every

question of arrangement and management, and it was wonderful how their views of such things coincided, though he saw everything from the point of scientific knowledge, while she saw all in the plain light of simple common-sense.

I was not admitted to the hospital until everything was finished, by which time Miss Sanders had gained a patient, and also a rosy-faced, obedient damsel to assist her. The patient was a middle-aged woman, an old resident in the village. Her malady was a rapid waste, and when I saw her the truth of my sister's words shone fully on me, and I felt how cruel it would have been had the worn-out invalid been doomed to the worry and excitement of strange sights and systems.

We found Bessie Sanders in the little sitting-room of the place, busily engaged with a basket full of that mysterious "white work" which always appears to excite a

feeling of dignified and business-like elation in the heart of every true woman. She looked uncommonly well, and her plain dark violet gown showed to double advantage, inasmuch as it suited both her office and her person. By a skilful arrangement of her own little personalities, and a few simple ornaments with which Ruth had presented her, she had given the humble apartment quite the sociable look of home. We did not find her alone. Agnes Herbert came forward to greet us, with her hat swinging in her hand, as if her visit was no hasty one.

We went over all the rooms, one after another, kitchen and dormitories. As sickness must be, such a place seemed pleasant to suffer in. If it were possible for a life to be all so dreary that one could not remember a mother's smile, or a single "good time," still in these quiet chambers the passing soul might surely carry away

one thanksgiving. The poor consumptive woman, sitting in her easy chair, almost too weak to speak, smiled kindly when she saw us. Oh, if we hope there are some angels somewhere in heaven who rejoice to know of us, let us be very gentle to the dying. They are starting for the land we long for. Let them take a good report of us.

"I only fear one thing," said Bessie, in reply to my warm praises of all I saw. "I only fear Miss Garrett has trusted me too much, and that I fill a place which another might supply much better."

"Well, if we had given Miss Sanders a longer notice, she might easily have taken a little training at some great hospital," I remarked to Ruth, as we walked homeward.

"Don't talk of what you don't understand, Edward," interrupted Ruth. "I wont say a word against the systems of the famous hospitals. Doubtless it is necessary for their nurses to be drilled like soldiers.

There are not enough staunchly true women to supply their requirements, and that discipline may do a great deal of good to the shams whom they are obliged to receive into their ranks. Is not there something in Miss Sanders which makes her just Bessie Sanders, and no one else,—and something in me which makes me Ruth Garrett, and nothing more? And don't tell me we should be improved if that something was taken out of us. Would you like pictures painted in faintly differing shades of the same colour? Would you like all the flowers in your garden to be alike?"

"But, my dear Ruth," I pleaded, "would you like variety such as existed between those famous ladies, Betsy Prig and Sarah Gamp?"

"And, my dear Edward," retorted my sister ironically, "because one system is bad, it does not always follow that its opposite is perfection. And if *you* believe that any

system can regenerate human nature, *I* don't. If Betsy Prig and Sarah Gamp existed under the old arrangements, depend upon it they have slipped in under the new ones, only of course they have changed their names!"

"Still, now-a-days," I said, "at least they cannot drink gin, and morally murder their patients."

"Those are very negative virtues in a nurse," replied my sister; "but what I complain about is the modern cant of 'training.' You men don't let it get among yourselves. When once you are grown up, by which time your general or technical education, as the case may be, is completed, you find out what each other can do, and set each other to do it. If a man cannot become a clerk by simply passing upwards through the various grades of a clerk's duty, he turns to something else. There is no establishment where he may be artificially

'trained' at the public expense. But if a girl wishes to be a book-keeper, instead of expecting her to work her way like a boy, many employers request her to bring them a certificate of competency from some training class, where she has been stupefied by sham ledgers, and dazzled by precepts which she will never need to practise. Teachers are wanted for national schools, and instead of suitable women being chosen and brought gradually onward through small schools to large ones, thousands of pounds are annually spent to make women competent, or rather what is called competent. Now, there is always somebody exactly fitted for every work that exists in the world, and that somebody should be found for it."

"But, Ruth," I suggested, "in speaking of men a minute ago, you said, 'when their technical education is completed.' Now this 'training' simply comes in the place of that technical education."

"Then why isn't it paid for in the same way, and taken at the same time, close at the heels of common school-days?" she asked, rather sharply. "And mind you that in ordinary male employment, shop-keeping, clerkships, and so forth, there is no 'training' at all, only a steady working up from the lowest step of the ladder. It is a natural development of all they learnt when boys. And every woman's early life should have fitted her for something. Has not an elder sister had good discipline for a governess, and a tradesman's daughter for a business woman, and so on? And there will never be more exceptional women wanted than exceptional chances will provide. And yet ten chances to one, instead of making the best of each as she is, some wiseacre will set her in 'training' to become what she is not."

"But I'm sorry to say a woman's early life does not always fit her for anything," I said.

"Then I'm afraid nothing else will?" retorted Ruth.

"But what is she to do?" I queried.

"Marry the first man who asks her," said my sister, shortly.

"And is a woman who is fit for nothing else fit for a wife?" I asked.

"No," she returned, "but she is quite good enough for any man who gives her a chance. But you are always asking me these sort of questions, Edward. Are you contemplating such a step for yourself?"

"Nay, Ruth," I answered, a little nettled; "I ask these questions gravely, and you turn them off with a joke. It is not a laughing matter."

"No," she said, "but it would do no good if I cried, and my sex don't feel they need anybody's tears. They think it is only the cruel injustice of the men which prevents them from filling the highest places in the land. Very likely the lord chancellor

does not know how to make tea, and so a woman who does not know either, thinks she could be lord chancellor. We hear that it is hard to obtain good nurses, or thorough governesses, and yet, forsooth, the ladies aim to become doctors and professors."

"But may not the deficiencies you name arise simply from want of training?" I pleaded.

"Then let them be trained by first painfully climbing the lowest step of the ladder, and staying there until they can mount higher without any help," she returned. "Till the ranks of good nurses are filled, women need not wish for opportunities to become doctors."

"But, Ruth," I said, "many women who would like to be doctors would shrink from mere nursing, because it is often foolishly regarded as a humiliating servitude."

"If a true gentlewoman by birth, breeding, or education, engages in any work, however humble," replied my sister, "she

does not sink to its lowest level, but she raises it to herself, and it is thought better of for her very sake. And mind, if women so scrupulously defer to a wrong popular prejudice, why don't they heed that other prejudice, which has some reasonable foundation, and hesitates before it gives a man's work to a woman?"

"But who shall define what is man's work and what is woman's?" I asked, briskly, thinking I had hit upon a poser.

"The proper seed for every soil is what grows there without forcing," returned Ruth, promptly. "I suppose a man or a woman may compel themselves to do almost anything, just as they may distort their limbs into unnatural attitudes. But you may always know when they are out of their proper place by the terrible bragging they make. An old bachelor does not boast of his ledger and cash-box, but he triumphs miserably in sewing on buttons and mending

gloves. A woman does not publish a list of her seams and samplers, but she glories in her examinations and certificates."

"But may not that be because she has conquered, not nature, but merely custom?" I inquired. "Don't you really think that some employments now monopolised by men might fairly be shared by women?"

"They might be opened to women," she answered. "A steady, patient girl, who can manage delicate needlework, could manage watchmaking. And there are many other occupations now kept by men which are quite within the compass of a woman's abilities. But then I don't think the men would object to admit a woman. I have not forgotten my own early days, Edward."

"I am glad to hear you admit that women might have a wider sphere than at present," I said.

"I admit less than you think," she returned, "and even from my admission, I

think you and I draw different inferences. I would not apprentice an indefinite number of girls to these employments, as is sometimes proposed. It would be sheer waste of time and money. In five years' time nineteen girls out of twenty would have married, and thus wholly retired—at least I hope so—to the other business of housekeeping. As a body, women will never pass beyond the stage of raw learners. And that is one reason why men need never fear their rivalry."

"But, Ruth, don't you think it would be better if girls had other objects in life besides matrimony?" I asked.

"Of course it would," she answered, "but putting it as you put it now, it is only twaddle. If you were a young man, would you like a girl to refuse you on the grounds that she had a good business, and so thought it her duty to keep to it?"

"No, I certainly should not," I replied.

"The fact is," my sister went on, "the people who start these movements proceed on a wrong track. They start with the belief that all women can follow occupations, for which not more than twenty per cent. are really suited. They ignore the fact that perhaps only one out of that twenty will require such occupation through her whole life. So they scare the men, and rouse all their opposition, by announcing that they will be beaten out of the field by female labour, equal in kind and superior in cheapness. Now this equality in kind and superiority in cheapness are both fallacies."

"Oh, Ruth," I said, indignantly, "will you say that women cannot work as well as men, when you know how well you carried on your own business?"

"I know all about it, Edward," she answered, "and that is why I say it. Didn't I have Latin manuscripts sent me, and didn't I always take them to be copied by

the old schoolmaster at Mallowe Academy, and didn't he allow me a small commission for giving him the job? Oh, Edward, Edward, that is how I succeeded. I knew what I could not do, as well as what I could!"

"But at any rate women's labour is certainly cheaper than men's," I said, presently.

"Mechanical labour of the sort we mean should have one price and only one," she returned. "If a woman devotes herself to these occupations, she cannot have time to cook her meals, or clean her room, or make her clothes. And so her existence becomes as costly as a man's. And remember, too, that the work which is easy to an ordinary man, requires a superior woman, in whose education much money and care have been invested. So she ought not to work except for a fair return on that investment."

"But those questions can scarcely be

considered in the labour market," I remarked.

"And that's just why a woman should never take the question of her labour into the labour market," she retorted. "If exceptional work come in her way, and she be able to do it, let her do it quietly, and be thankful. When an able woman steps from the beaten track, they are not her friends who make a flourish of trumpets as if an army were about to follow."

"Then what do you lay down as the first principle in a girl's education for the future?" I inquired.

"Develop all those powers and instincts which will make her a good mistress of a family, as she will most likely become," returned Ruth. "And even if not, after such rearing, she need not fear for a good and honest maintenance. Train her in industry, and patience, and energy, and whether she be single or married, she

will be always worth her place in the world."

"But still if some women have special talents for medicine or science," I said, "does it not seem a pity they should not follow them out?"

Ruth laughed.

"Of course they can do as they like," she answered. "But I have noticed that those who best realize great responsibilities, are always slowest to voluntarily incur them. And I observe that these lady-doctors are meant to attend upon women and children. Let me warn them that women will never trust women in that way."

"But is it not hard they should have so little confidence in their own sex?" I queried. "I wonder how it is!"

"Because women know what women are," answered Ruth; adding dryly, "It is not for me to deny that they might mistrust men as much if they knew them as well.

But. in the meantime, timid mistrust, however mistaken, injures a patient; while child-like confidence, however credulous, is half the cure."

Just at this moment, at the turn of a lane, we encountered Mr. Weston. I say "encountered," for he paused before us and stared, as if it took him a moment to recall who we were. However, when he had collected himself, he saluted us warmly enough, and offered Ruth his arm. So as the path was sometimes rather narrow, I was obliged to drop behind, and soon fell into a reverie over our recent conversation. I am not very quick in discussion, and Ruth soon sets me down. Therefore, though to me her arguments are unanswerable, I am not sure they are so to other people. But even if there be a little prejudice in them, they are worthy of thought. And after all, what seems prejudice is sometimes truth. And certainly Ruth acts

out her own precepts, and her actions seem always to the point. And I almost fancy that tests the goodness of precepts, as much as adding together the second and third rows proves a subtraction sum.

Walking behind Ruth and Mr. Weston, I could distinctly hear their voices, but I did not listen for more, until my ear was struck by my sister's saying—

"Well, sir, I have just been preaching down woman's rights; but she has one right which I have never heard disputed—the right of refusal."

"If that is no secret, Ruth," I said, "I should like to know what it is."

"Mr. Weston will tell you, if he wishes," she answered, walking on.

The young man turned, and stood still. His honest blue eyes had the helpless look of a poor dog's, when it is hurt by its own master's foot.

"She's refused me," he said, "and it's all over!" and then he walked on by my side, and, of course, I did not look into his face.

"We must all submit to these things sometimes," I observed, presently; "ay, and often to far worse!" (For surely it was better to be rejected by Alice M'Callum than to be jilted by Maria Willoughby.) "But still, Weston, I should not have thought this of Alice. She ought to have guessed what you wanted long ago."

"Don't blame her, please, sir," he said; "she's never given me any encouragement; but yet somehow I thought she liked me, and—I've left her crying now. I thought she liked me—I did."

"Are you sure she does not?" I inquired, more hopefully. "What did she say?"

"She said—she said she'd never carry

the cloud on her family into any man's house, sir. She's a fool, Mr. Garrett!"

"You didn't say so?" I queried.

"No, and I don't say so, sir," he exclaimed, "except as if an angel lived in the world, we should very likely call her a fool! But I shouldn't have liked her to have sent me away without caring, sir; and yet now her caring makes it all the harder! What shall I do, sir?"

"Go home," said I, "go home, and be quiet. Things always prove better than they seem. And even if they don't, God and one's work remain, Mr. Weston. Go home, and be quiet."

"Oh, sir," said he, forlornly, "could you bear it?"

"I have borne it, my boy," I answered. "Yes, twice—once in sorrow, and once in wrath and bitterness. And yet now, I would not change anything if I could. Go home, and be quiet."

"And this is the end of it," said Ruth, when I rejoined her, after parting from him; "and this is another specimen how—

'The best-laid plans of mice and men
Gang aft a-jee!'"

END OF VOL. II.

TINSLEYS' MAGAZINE,

An Illustrated Monthly,

Price One Shilling,

CONDUCTED BY EDMUND YATES,

CONTAINS :

Breaking a Butterfly; or, Blanche Ellerslie's Ending. By the Author of "GUY LIVINGSTONE," &c.

A House of Cards. A Novel. By a New Writer.

Novels. By EDMUND YATES, Author of "Black Sheep," &c.

English Photographs. By an American.

The Latest Paris Fashions (*Illustrated*).

&c. &c. &c.

OPINIONS OF THE PRESS.

"Well edited, well written, well illustrated, and produced in a neat and handsome style, it can hardly fail to achieve success."—*Daily Telegraph.*

"A marvellous shilling's-worth."—*Fifeshire Journal.*

"*Tinsleys' Magazine* promises to be in every way a success."—*Aberdeen Journal.*

"It is a splendid shilling's-worth—even as shilling's-worths in magazines now go."—*Birmingham Daily Gazette.*

"Printed on good paper, with excellent type, and contains articles to suit all tastes."—*Buckingham Express.*

"Handsomely printed and illustrated, with double-column pages, and specially caters for the ladies by giving a coloured fashion plate and an article upon the fashions."—*Northern Daily Express.*

"This new monthly is richly embellished, and is very cheap at a shilling."—*Staffordshire Sentinel.*

"In outward appearance it is chaste and elegant, and the interior is a nice specimen of the typographical art."—*Merionethshire Standard.*

"The getting-up of the magazine is highly creditable to the publishers, editor, and authors alike."—*Swansea Journal.*

"Exteriorly it has an attractive appearance, and interiorly it is well got up, printed with excellent type in the antique style, and the illustrations are first-class."—*Wrexham Advertiser.*

"Destined, we think, to win early a good place in public favour."—*Bath Chronicle.*

"Is beautifully printed in good clear type, is tastefully illustrated, and in every way well got up."—*Northampton Herald.*

"It is lively, clever, and interesting."—*Coventry Standard.*

"It is neatly got up, is well printed on good paper, with a new neat, and clear type, and there are five or six clever illustrations."—*Alloa Advertiser.*

"Very much better than the average."—*Andover Advertiser.*

"Must rapidly become a favourite with those who appreciate first-class productions."—*Blandford Express.*

"Paper, print, illustrations, editor, contributors, all look well."—*Derbyshire Courier.*

"Calculated to become highly popular, more especially among the ladies."—*Border Advertiser.*

TINSLEY BROTHERS, 18, CATHERINE STREET, STRAND.

TINSLEY BROTHERS'
CHEAP EDITIONS OF POPULAR NOVELS.

BY MRS. J. H. RIDDELL, Author of "George Geith," &c.

Far Above Rubies. 6*s.*	Phemie Keller. 6*s.*
The Race for Wealth. 6*s.*	Maxwell Drewitt. 6*s.*
George Geith. 6*s.*	Too Much Alone. 6*s.*
The Rich Husband. 6*s.*	City and Suburb. 6*s.*

BY MRS. HENRY WOOD, Author of "East Lynne," &c.

Elster's Folly. 6*s.*	Mildred Arkell. 6*s.*
St. Martin's Eve. 6*s.*	Trevlyn Hold. 6*s.*

BY THE AUTHOR OF "GUY LIVINGSTONE."

Sword and Gown. 2*s.*	Maurice Dering. 6*s.*
Barren Honour. 2*s.*	Guy Livingstone. 5*s.*

Also, now ready, Uniform with the above.

Black Sheep. By EDMUND YATES, Author of "The Rock Ahead," &c.

Not Wisely, but Too Well. A Novel. By the Author of "Cometh up as a Flower." 6*s.*

Lizzy Lorton of Greyrigg. By Mrs. LYNN LINTON, Author of "Sowing the Wind," &c. 6*s.*

Archie Lovell. By the Author of "The Morals of Mayfair," &c. 6*s.*

Miss Forrester. By the Author of "Archie Lovell," &c. 6*s.*

Recommended to Mercy. By the Author of "Sink or Swim?" 6*s.*

The Savage Club Papers (1867). With all the original Illustrations. 2*s.*

TINSLEY BROTHERS, 18, CATHERINE STREET, STRAND.