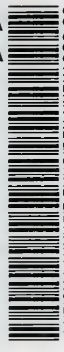
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This little volume had its origin in the following circumstance. It was suggested, as a Christmas amusement, that one of a party should draw a series of sketches, which the rest should severally interweave into some short story or description. Subsequently, a proposal was made that a volume, so framed, should be published, with a view to increasing the funds for the erection of a church and schools at Bonchurch, in which all the contributors felt a common interest.

The original plan has been faithfully adhered to: the engravings, therefore, are not illustrations of the letter-press, but the letter-press of the engravings. The Sketches themselves are, in fact, views of actual scenes, and were

finished before they were submitted to the writers. It was, however, left to their option to assign to each of them either the real or a fictitious name, and to arrange the series in any order they pleased.

Bonchurch,
December 9th, 1847.

LIST OF PLATES.

The plates are referred to in the several stories under the following names. They are placed for convenience in the supposed order of the "Six Pictures" in the "Emblems of Life."

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WALTER LORIMER.

. . . . wavering still,
Unfit alike for good or ill.

Rokeby.

WALTER LORIMER.

CHAPTER I.

ST. BEES.

(Plate IV.)

On a still summer evening, some thirty or forty years ago, two figures might have been seen on the summit of the precipitous hill upon which stands the old gray octangular tower, once forming a part of the little oratory of St. Bees. One was a man in the prime of life, who lay stretched upon the turf in an attitude indicative rather of repose of body than of mind. His head was raised, and his arm extended, and the expression of his countenance showed that his whole energies were devoted to the task of arresting the wandering attention of the boy who stood beside him.

"Listen, Walter," he said; but the tone of

command was lost upon the merry child, who, clapping his hands in glee, exclaimed :

"Now, papa, I shall have it;" and, bounding away, pursued a bright-coloured butterfly from flower to flower, amidst tufts of fern and prickly furze, until, weary with his vain endeavours, he returned again to his father.

This time, however, there was no attempt to amuse or occupy him. Mr. Lorimer's eye was fixed upon the distant horizon, or if, for an instant, it rested upon nearer objects, it was with an air of abstraction which showed that he was insensible to the beauty spread before him. Yet the scene was very lovely. A wide landscape lay beneath, dotted with hedge-rose trees and cottages, and ending in a sharp coast-line, forming a series of bays, the outline of which was at first marked by steep sandy banks overrun by vegetation ; whilst in the distance the land rose suddenly into a perpendicular chalk cliff of great height, standing out in bold relief against the golden sky. The evening was unusually tranquil ; the light grass was scarcely stirred, and the surface of the

sea reflected in unbroken distinctness the sails and masts of the solitary ship which rested apparently motionless upon its bosom. Even the sounds of life were hushed: the tinkling of a sheep bell was faintly heard far beneath in the valley, the sea-gull swept his rapid wing silently over the blue waters, and the ceaseless plashing of the tide rolling in upon the shingly beach, seemed the murmur, not of this shifting transitory earth, but of that unchangeable world where there shall be rest for ever. If nature alone could ever calm the troubled heart of man, surely it must be at such an hour and in such a scene. Yet Mr. Lorimer's brow was clouded, and when, after leaning his head upon his hand for many minutes, he again looked at his little boy, there was less of parental fondness in his glance, than of foreboding and distrust.

"Here, Walter," he exclaimed, drawing the child towards him, "recollect more clearly what they said."

"It was nurse, papa," replied the boy, "she was talking to——"

"Quick, quick," interrupted his father impetuously, "let me hear the words."

Walter lifted his dark intelligent eye to his father's face, and read in it that the mood of the moment was not one to be trifled with. "I don't know the words, papa," he answered boldly; "but nurse thinks that if you had been a wise man, we should never have had to live at the dull old farm."

For an instant Mr. Lorimer writhed under the implied accusation, but his answer, though sad, was free from bitterness: "When you are a man, Walter, you will know more about it; now, run off to the top of the hill and see the sun set, and then come back when I call."

Walter was gone in an instant. His father followed him with his eye, and anxiety settled yet more deeply upon his face as he watched his child's movements. They were restless and undetermined, governed, as it seemed, by no fixed purpose, but shaping their course from every trifle that crossed his path; turned aside by the beauty of a flower; attracted by the novelty of a winding path; one moment

directed straight towards the point named ; the next arrested by some sudden fancy, which came but to be succeeded by another as fleeting. It was hard to find fault with that which seems the natural characteristic of childhood ; but vexation and almost impatience were discoverable in Mr. Lorimer's voice, as he suddenly recalled the child to his side, and pointing to the ship, said, "Walter, I wish you could learn to be like that pretty vessel. Just see, how quiet and steady it is."

"It would toss about in a storm, though," replied the boy sharply.

"Yes, but if you were in a storm, you would go wherever the waves carried you; the ship would go straight on its way still."

"All ships don't," answered Walter.

"Not ships which have lost their rudder ; but I should be very sorry to think you would be like them."

Walter's interest was for the moment engrossed, and his look was directed to the vessel with an air of great thought.

"Boys are not ships," he said at length, in a contradictory tone.

"But they may be like them, Walter: that is all I mean."

"Like them,—how? what makes the ships go straight? what do you mean by a rudder?"

"You must see a rudder, before you can quite understand," replied Mr. Lorimer. "A rudder is a part of the ship which serves to guide it, and prevent it from being twisted first this way, and then that. But you are not like the ship, because, instead of going directly forward, you are always changing and running after something else. If I were to tell you now to return home, you would walk a little distance, and then, if any one stopped to speak to you, or if you met any thing to amuse you, you would forget what you meant to do, and set off another way."

"Is it very wrong?" asked Walter.

A deep sigh was the only answer; and the truth of Mr. Lorimer's observation was quickly shown, for Walter's notice was drawn to a curious caterpillar crawling upon the turf, and the subject of the conversation passed from his mind.

" He will never be a great or a good man," escaped Mr. Lorimer's lips: " he has no strength of will."

" Strength of will !" exclaimed Walter, catching the last words ; " what is strength of will ?"

" Strength to say—I will, and nothing shall prevent me ; strength to determine that you will do what you have to do ; strength——" Mr. Lorimer felt he was speaking beyond his child's comprehension, and he paused.

" I can say, I will," replied Walter, " but nurse tells me not."

The difficulty was becoming yet greater, touching upon the delicate line which separates the exaggeration of right, and the beginning of wrong.

" I am not speaking of your own will, Walter," observed Mr. Lorimer at length ; " but of the will to do what you are bidden ; that is what I wish you to have."

Walter's reply was a shout of delight, as a rabbit, wandering from a neighbouring warren, ran by him, and, in an instant, he was in full

pursuit. Mr. Lorimer's look was one of despair, but his eye rested upon the tower of the old chapel, and holier thoughts came to his aid; and, as if to reward the spirit of faith, Walter quickly returned, and throwing his arms round his neck, said, "Don't be vexed, papa,—I do mean to try."

"Try what?" asked Mr. Lorimer, attempting to smile, "to say—I will, and be naughty in the nursery?"

"No, no, papa, but to say—I will, when I am told to do things."

"And to begin at once,—in trifles, Walter,—there is the difficulty. Even if there seems no harm in leaving off what you have determined to do, still to go on, because you have determined."

"Like the ship," said Walter.

"Yes, like the ship when it mounts over the waves, instead of being turned about by them, and uses them only as helps towards reaching the haven to which it is sent. Our haven is—what, Walter?"

"Heaven," replied the child reverently.

"Yes, Heaven is our home—and the waves?"

"They are the waves of this troublesome world," exclaimed Walter quickly; "Mr. Spencer said so when baby was christened."

"The waves of this troublesome world, and the land of everlasting life," repeated Mr. Lorimer to himself.

"Mamma is there," said Walter, a look of awe stealing over the brightness of his childish countenance. Mr. Lorimer averted his head, and Walter withdrew to a little distance. Child though he was, and thoughtless, and changeable, he had learnt to feel that grief is sacred.

"We will go home," said Mr. Lorimer, as he rose suddenly, after a short silence. Walter appeared unwilling to obey.

"Still thinking of the ship?" inquired his father, marking the direction in which he was looking.

"I should like to go in it to see mamma," said Walter.

Mr. Lorimer's lip quivered, but it was the only sign of agitation.

"Walter," he replied firmly, "we are both going there, at least God has put us in the way to go, but that way is not by sailing over the sea, but by doing what He bids us."

"I wish it was sailing over the sea," said Walter; "I should like that."

Mr. Lorimer half smiled. "But can you not try and fancy something like it now? When little troubles come, and when you are tempted to leave what you meant to do, and run after something else, then recollect that is just what it would be, if that ship, instead of keeping on its straight course, were to go in whatever direction the tide and the waves drove it. The ship in such case would never reach its port, or if it did reach it, it would be greatly broken and injured."

"And I shall never go to Heaven, to see dear mamma," said Walter, "if I don't go on straight?"

Mr. Lorimer stopped, and kissing his little

boy's forehead, said eagerly, yet in a softened tone; "Repeat this after me, Walter,—you cannot understand it now, but you will by and by:—Every event in life is either man's master or his slave."

Walter repeated the words.

"Again, again," exclaimed his father: the child obeyed, and then added, "I won't be a slave, papa,—ever." He had touched a painful chord. Mr. Lorimer paused as he was about to descend the hill.

"Quick, Walter," he said, in a tone of forced cheerfulness; "run by yourself, and tell them I am coming; and remember," he added, with sudden severity,—"at once—to the farm, no turning aside on any pretence."

Walter was accustomed to the changes of his father's humour, and was gone in a moment. Mr. Lorimer did not stay to watch him, but retracing his steps, strode rapidly to the summit of the hill, and leaning against the wall of the chapel, gave way, with the weakness of a woman, to a flood of bitter grief. Sorrow of heart was there—the sorrow of

bereavement; and the humiliation of blighted hopes and a wrecked fortune, and the anguish, greater than all, the upbraiding of an awakened conscience. A slave! yes, Mr. Lorimer had been from childhood the slave of circumstances. The inheritor of a large property, he had squandered away the whole, with the exception of the small portion which was entailed upon Walter; the object of a devoted affection, he had wearied it by petty failings; the possessor of talents and influence, he had wasted both by engaging in projects which never were completed. Walter was now what he had once been, in every thing except his position in life. What would be his retrospections when he should have reached the same age? Mr. Lorimer shuddered at the fears which crossed his mind, and throwing himself upon his knees, prayed, with the earnestness of a father's love, that his children,—Walter the object of his great anxiety, and the infant girl, who within a few weeks had been received into the ark of Christ's Church,—might be "steadfast in faith, joyful

through hope, and rooted in charity; and so pass the waves of this troublesome world, that finally they might come to the land of everlasting life."

CHAPTER II.

WELHURST.

(Plate III.)

Twenty years had gone by—it was still in the height of summer, when the air was calm and soft, and the sea unruffled, and the sky without a cloud. But the scene was changed from the lofty hill of St. Bees to the sea-port town of Welhurst. The place was remarkable for little beyond the beauty of its situation. There were some straggling houses of a comfortable size, but many of a mean, poverty-stricken aspect; some shops which supplied the wants of the neighbourhood; a few gardens intermixed with irregular streets; and, here and there, a few trees which had braved the power of the south-west wind. But except for the broad open sea, the beach, and the white cliffs, Welhurst would have passed without notice amongst the many places of the same stamp; though, with these advantages, it was

gradually rising in dignity, and boasted of its reading-room, stage-coaches, and post-horses, together with public baths, and a good hotel; all temptations to strangers who might wish to enjoy the benefit or the luxury of the fresh sea-breezes.

About five o'clock in the evening of the day on which we would resume our tale, the road that passed through the suburb of Welhurst was more than usually lively. A carriage and pair was driving slowly up the slight ascent at the foot of which the town lay; two cows, attended by a peasant boy, were wending their way in the contrary direction; a blind beggar, leaning upon his stick, with his hat off, was advancing towards the carriage under the guidance of a little girl; and two ladies, plainly dressed, and accompanied by a child, were approaching from a road which just at this point met the highway from Welhurst to London. One or two figures also were seen in the distance, but too far off to discover more than their general outline.

"Bertha," said the elder of the two ladies to

her companion, "we must be early, the coach will not arrive for half an hour at the least."

"It does not signify," replied the other, gravely; "he will not come; the Hornsleys will be sure to keep him."

"Nay, then, why bring me here? there are many prettier walks."

"But I have business in Welhurst, and besides——" and Bertha Lorimer looked at her friend with an arch smile, which beautifully lit up a countenance in general remarked for the peculiar placidity of the regular delicate features; "besides, I confess to a hope which my words belie."

"This brother of yours must be a strange person, Bertha; very unlike you."

"Most unlike:" but breaking off, suddenly, Bertha sprang forward with the exclamation, "Yes, that is he! Why should he have come in that way?" and leaving her friend, she went up to the carriage, which was immediately stopped.

Mrs. Damer, the wife of a clergyman who

had only recently settled in the neighbourhood, watched with considerable interest the meeting between Bertha and her brother. Walter Lorimer's name was a familiar sound, for he was the constant theme of Bertha's hopes and fears, and Mrs. Damer's curiosity was raised to discover whether the young officer, whom from various circumstances she had not yet seen, at all resembled his sister's description. There was a short greeting at the carriage door between Bertha and Walter, and the party who were with him, and then Walter alighted, and drawing his sister's arm within his own, began a hurried explanation of the reasons which induced him to accompany his friends, the Hornsleys, in their carriage, instead of taking advantage of the coach, which was the usual mode of transit from the place where he had been staying. In a few seconds his attention was directed to another object. The blind beggar had humbly waited by the road-side till the carriage drove off; his hat was still in his hand, but he seemed to have scarcely the power or the will to ask for relief. His countenance

expressed humiliation and much suffering, and as the child who was his guide whispered something in his ear, he drew back, and seating himself on a bank, appeared anxious to shun rather than to excite attention. Walter's eye was attracted by him, and he stopped his sister as she was hastening to the spot where Mrs. Damer and her little boy awaited them.

"Bertha, I know that face," he said in a tone of compassion and interest; "I am sure I know it."

"I have no recollection of it, dear Walter, and this is not the moment to inquire. Speak to Mrs. Damer first, and then we will ask about him."

Before the sentence was ended, Walter had left her, and was standing by the old beggar, eagerly inquiring his name, his age, and the place of his abode. Bertha's interest was excited also, and excusing herself to her friend, she joined her brother. Walter drew her aside.

"You must recollect him now, Bertha, I am sure; my father's former steward;—the man

who would not leave his service, who stood by him when he had lost every thing except the old farm. What a miserable change!" Bertha's memory appeared confused. "You were young at the time he left us," continued Walter; "it was about six years after we came to the farm; but I was so fond of him, I can never forget him. Ralph," he added kindly, going up to the old man, and taking his hand affectionately, "surely you must remember Walter Lorimer—Master Walter."

The beggar lifted his sightless eyes to the young man's face, and tears fell down his cheek.

"And I am Bertha, Ralph: you will know me better than I know you, except that I have so often heard my father and my brother talk of you. Poor papa! it will cut him to the heart to see you in this state."

"It is God's will," said the old man solemnly; "but I did not think, Miss Bertha, it would ever have come to this when I left my master."

"You were right in leaving him, quite right," exclaimed Walter. "My father always

said that you stayed with him longer than any sense of duty could require. But you must tell us what has happened, and we will——" help, he was going to say, but the sudden consciousness of poverty checked his generosity, and he added, "we will talk over your affairs and see what can be done." Just then a servant in livery rode past. "That is one of the Hornsley people," cried Walter; "I wish he would stop, that I might send a message."

"A message,—what message, Walter? you have only just parted from them."

"Yes, but they wish me to join them—to go with them—they have a party this week, a pic-nic, at Risingford, the old castle. How provoking! why does the fellow ride at such a rate?"

"But it cannot signify now,—you can write."

"Yes, yes, it does signify, I must decide at once."

"But what answer will you give?"

"Never mind; don't stop me, Bertha. If he walks his horse up the hill, I shall catch him."

"But, my dear Walter, surely to-morrow will do. Shall you say yes or no?"

"No, certainly; I meant to do so just now, only they would press me. Let me go, I shall be back in an instant."

Bertha said nothing, though disquietude settled on her countenance, as Walter set off at full speed to overtake the servant. She turned to the blind man, who was waiting with an air of resignation until notice should again be bestowed upon him; but many times her attention was distracted from his answers to her inquiries, as she watched Walter toiling up the hill till he overtook the rider. A longer time elapsed than the message at all required, but still Walter continued his questions, or his orders. Bertha thought each moment that he would return, and telling the child to lead her grandfather to the bank near which Mrs. Damer was standing, she made him sit down to rest himself.

But in those short moments a change had occurred. When Bertha looked round again, Walter was gone, and the man-servant riding

down the hill, came towards her to say that Mr. Lorimer was gone on about a quarter of a mile further. Mrs. Hornsley's carriage was most probably stopping at the house of a friend, and Mr. Lorimer wished to deliver his own message.

"Why such a sigh, Bertha?" asked Mrs. Damer, when the servant again rode off. Bertha's sweet happy face grew yet more thoughtful, and answering the question only by a smile, which in no way proceeded from the heart, she drew out her purse, and giving the old steward half a crown, told him that it would be better not to wait for her brother's return, but to come to the farm on the following day, when they should be able to hear his story without interruption. Ralph looked grateful yet disappointed, and Bertha, wishing him good-bye, prepared to return home. The walk was at first pursued in silence, except when broken by the exclamations of little Frank Damer; but at last, addressing her friend as if ashamed of her want of courtesy, Bertha said,

"I think you know me well enough not to wonder at my sudden moods."

"Moods, dear Bertha! I have never seen them yet, but I am vexed that you are vexed."

"Though you cannot tell the reason why?" asked Bertha.

"Yes, but that is not quite the case now; I can guess a reason."

"But not all the reason. No one, no one but myself, can know all. To see a character frittered, wasted, which might be so great, which is so noble and generous!"

"Are you sure you do not exaggerate?"

"No," replied Bertha; "it is not in the power of words to do that. Walter might be all that one's best wishes could desire; he will be nothing,—worse than nothing,—a man of the world, a spendthrift, a gambler, whatever circumstances may make him,—because he has no strength of will, and has never practised the art of acquiring it in the trifling events of life."

"It is a difficult lesson to teach where nature has not given the disposition."

"But Walter has had experience," replied Bertha, while her colour heightened, and the soft quiet tones that were natural to her were raised by the feelings which the subject awoke. "It is the fault of his family, and he knows it. It was the ruin of my father's fortune, and the destruction of my mother's happiness; Walter has been warned from childhood."

"But I have heard you say the defect has only, as yet, shown itself in trifles."

"I begin to think there is no such thing as a trifle," replied Bertha; "certainly nothing can be one which implies or involves a habit of mind; and if we indulge any fault in trifles, how are we to guard against it in important cases?"

Mrs. Damer smiled as she answered, "You are so unlike every one else I ever met with at your age, Bertha, and so unlike even yourself, your outward self."

"Yes," replied Bertha; "I know it. I am called indifferent, and sweet tempered; some people say I am gentle, but there are many volcanoes hidden beneath the chill earth."

"Dear Bertha," replied her companion gravely, "you must, indeed, be careful how you indulge this reserve; by brooding over your troubles you will increase them until they are unbearable."

"And to whom can I speak of them?" inquired Bertha; "except yourself, there lives not a being in the world, besides my father and Walter, who knows or cares for me. I was born in poverty and sorrow; I have grown up in retirement and privation, and in retirement and privation I shall die."

"Privation?" repeated Mrs. Damer hastily, but the word was no sooner said than she blushed deeply. Bertha Lorimer, though confiding and simple-minded, was not a person to allow too minute an inquiry into the state of her family affairs.

"Yes, privation," replied Bertha; "but it is useless to trouble you with domestic cares; and privation, in my case, may mean only that I have not a carriage and four at my disposal."

Mrs. Damer was silent; she was pondering

upon the peculiar character of the youg girl, in whose fate she was beginning to feel anxiously interested. It seemed that Bertha had concentrated in herself all that strength of character and fixedness of purpose which was deficient in her family; and Walter's weakness must, therefore, be as irritating to her natural disposition as it was contrary to her sense of right.

"I know what you often think," said Bertha, resuming the conversation abruptly; "you are afraid that what I call strength of will is but another name for obstinacy. Well! I am aware that it may become so; but I try to be upon my guard in my own case, and I hope I could advise Walter. I would never have him bent upon an object without reason. I would desire, for him and for myself, such a steady, constant, unwavering sense of duty, that our lightest intentions should be governed by it. Duty should be the helmsman, and a strong resolute will the rudder, to guide the ship. It is my father's favourite illustration, learnt from bitter experience."

"You seek what few people possess," replied Mrs. Damer.

"That I see every day; but it may not be, therefore, the less desirable; and we have the authority of Scripture to prove that it is so. Have you never been struck by St. Paul's eagerness to disclaim lightness of purpose;—by the solemn way in which he affirms that his word was not 'yea and nay?"

Again Mrs. Damer smiled. "What you say is very true, my dear Bertha; but you speak like a woman of fifty rather than a girl of twenty."

"I am fifty in many respects, replied Bertha. "I have lived alone with my own thoughts from childhood, except when my father has roused himself from despondency to warn me against the faults which he says have been the ruin of us all; and I have watched the same faults growing up in Walter, and have seen my father battling with them, and failing; because, notwithstanding his earnest endeavours, he could not, when advanced in life, so far shake off his natural disposition, as to keep any

one fixed rule; and now, since Walter has been at home, my father's spirits have evidently sunk; and I know that his health is so precarious that the least excitement may be fatal to him. Is not all this enough to make me a woman of fifty?"

Mrs. Damer's answer was a gentle pressure of Bertha's hand. Something told her that such forebodings were not without foundation, that the day of trial and of change was at hand.

CHAPTER III.

THE MANOR HOUSE.

(Plate V.)

The following day found Walter Lorimer and his sister enjoying the luxury of a summer morning, as they walked together in front of the old Manor Farm, which for twenty years had been their home. There was a curious mixture of refinement and neglect about the place. Much beauty in the antique gables and deep mullioned windows, and tall stacks of ornamented chimneys; elegance in the arrangement of the small garden, surrounded by a low wall; but poverty, cold, barren poverty, in the decayed woodwork, and the blocked up windows. To Bertha's eye, however, all was perfect; she would not have had a stone or a brick removed; and if, occasionally, the thought occurred to her that money might be well bestowed in repairs, if not in ornament, she turned from the unwelcome idea, and rested

with complacency upon that which formed the most prominent and most welcome object connected with her home, and which she would have deemed it almost sacrilege to touch. This was a very small, very old Norman church, standing in a churchyard separated from the road by a low wall, and at first sight scarcely to be distinguished from the outhouses belonging to the farm except by its little wooden belfry surmounted by a weather-cock; yet dear to the eye of the architect and antiquarian from the richness of the carved arch over the doorway, which Bertha had learned to consider, perhaps truly, one of the most perfect specimens of its kind. On this occasion, however, neither Bertha nor Walter were thinking much of the church or the farm. On a bank by the roadside sat Ralph Staines and his little grandchild; his look of dejection and want forming a strong contrast to the sturdy and contented appearance of a farmer, who, mounted on a small gray pony, with a pack-saddle behind him, and a dog following him, was stopping to talk for a few minutes with a neighbour on foot.

Bertha and her brother had been listening to the history of the steward's trials, following him through sickness and misfortune, until distress forced him to take refuge with his daughter, the wife of a man who, like himself, had once known prosperous days, but who was now living in a poor cottage on the sea-shore, and gaining a livelihood by fishing.

"It was his daughter's illness," he said, "which had driven him to desperation. She was in a hopeless state, and he could not assist her. He had thought of applying to his old master, but feared to be troublesome." Pride also might have weighed with him, though he did not confess it, for now he would not enter the house. His master, he heard, was unwell, and could not then see him; to wait amongst the servants he could not bear; and, after many entreaties, Walter and Bertha left him whilst they went to consult upon what it would be best to do.

"Money, money!" exclaimed Walter, impatiently, "that is the one thing after all."

"Is it?" asked Bertha, "I doubt whether you would find it so."

"Money would save Ralph Staines from wretchedness," replied Walter.

"Yet much may be done," continued his sister, "without our having what is generally called money,—I mean riches. The difficulty is to inquire personally. I can scarcely leave my father to go to the shore, and I do not like to talk to him much, he is very unwell this morning."

"Nervous," observed Walter, "nothing more. He has been looking over papers, and has given me a number for my own private reading. What a bore business is, Bertha! and that stupid entail—of what use is it?"

"I don't know," said Bertha, in a tone unlike her usual self-possession.

"And my father is so unutterably melancholy when business is mentioned," continued Walter. "He began something to me this morning—something about you, but it upset him, and he was obliged to give up the subject;

and then he pushed the papers across the table and looked quite ill, and I almost thought he would have fainted."

"His mind would be relieved if you would look at those papers," replied Bertha, still speaking with constraint.

"I intend to look; I should have done it this morning, but I saw you in the garden, and then I could not resist coming out."

"Dear Walter, if you would only learn to fix your mind to one thing, and not allow it to be disturbed. I don't mean—I am not speaking of this instance in particular."

"Well, I will, I will; any thing to please you."

"But, Walter, indeed it is not only for the present that I care. Will you remember that?"

"Yes, certainly, I will remember all you wish. I ought to do so," he added, seriously and affectionately; "you have been my best help and comfort for many long years."

Bertha's placid face was agitated for an instant; she did not answer Walter's remarks,

when he again alluded to Mr. Lorimer's critical state of health; but, merely saying that she would go and see whether her father was equal to hearing old Ralph's history, she proceeded to the study, and Walter went to his own chamber. On a table, in the centre of the room, lay a heap of papers scattered in confusion. Walter looked at them with dislike; business was his aversion, and there were parchments, and cramped penmanship, and documents which he supposed could be of no importance. A statement in his father's handwriting caught his eye, and he took it up; but another paper lay beside it headed with the date 1607, which excited his curiosity. He had not made up his mind whether to examine into his father's affairs then, or to wait. It seemed that it would be better to wait, at least till the business with Ralph was concluded; but, as usual, Walter was without a purpose, and, sitting down to the table, he began to decipher the old manuscript. It was a law deed of no great interest or consequence; but it served to amuse him a little while; and when

Bertha knocked at the door to tell him that she wished to speak with him, his answer was a request that she would wait: he was very busy, and he would be with her in a few minutes. But many minutes elapsed, and Walter's door was still closed. Perhaps, had Bertha then known the thoughts which engrossed him, she would have been more willing to excuse his instability. The old manuscript had been cast aside, for Walter was soon weary with an occupation which involved trouble, but in its stead, he held in his hand a short note written in a trembling hand, and signed with his mother's name. It was her last request to his father, her dying entreaty, that he would educate their children religiously, and teach their little Walter to look upon his infant sister as his especial charge. "Tell him," it was written, "that his duty to her is next to his duty to God and his earthly father. Let it be his object early, and perhaps it may save him from the fate of his family." The note ended abruptly, and beneath the signature was written,

"Every event in life is either man's master or his slave." Walter started; the words had a strange power over him; in an instant they bore him back, through long, long years, and he stood once more upon the lofty hill, by the side of the ruined chapel, and heard the plashing of the ceaseless waves, and the soft whispers of the evening breeze, and the tinkling of the far-off bell, and gazed in ecstasy upon the broad band of light which sparkled upon the blue water. And there upon the calm ocean lay the motionless vessel, the type of himself—the symbol of his own existence. Yet was it a type? That silent, soulless thing, the work of man's art, had fulfilled the purpose of its creation: it had reached the haven to which it was destined; and he—the waves of this troublesome world were tossing around him, and his struggles were faint, and his will was weak, and he was driven to and fro at the mercy of every opposing current, and his end would be—where? Walter murmured a blessing upon his mother's memory, and tears of

penitence and self-reproach rushed to his eye. Bertha's voice summoned him to the window: she was standing underneath.

"Walter, I have waited very long; Ralph was obliged to go, his daughter was expecting him; but I intend to walk to the shore soon."

Walter nodded his head in acquiescence, and Bertha moved away, vexed that he should be so little interested in the result of her interview with her father. Yet she was mistaken in supposing that Walter was not interested. His best feelings were at that moment brought into play, but they were still impulse only. This was the second time that Ralph had gone away, after waiting for him in vain. He felt that he had been wrong, and he would atone for it. He would at least do something useful and kind; and the idea had scarcely presented itself, when the papers were gathered together and put away, and Walter ran down stairs to his father's study.

Twenty years had done their work, more than their ordinary work, upon Mr. Lorimer's constitution. At sixty-five, he was a feeble,

decrepid old man, his face marked by suffering, his tall figure bent by repeated attacks of dangerous illness. His life hung upon a thread, and he felt that it did; but for Bertha, he could have been contented that it should be so. It was only when he thought of her, left unprotected, and with barely sufficient for her maintenance, that he was anxious to live. Then, indeed, his faith sometimes grew weak, and he mourned over Walter's unstable character, with a sorrow aggravated by self-reproach. Many parents might have safely confided the protection and support of an only sister to an elder brother, the sole inheritor of the small family property; but Mr. Lorimer could not be happy under such a prospect. Unexpected losses had lately diminished a small sum which he had saved for Bertha; and there was now but one resource left, to cut off the entail, and so provide for her with a portion of Walter's fortune. The alternative was painful to his pride; more painful to his conscience, which told him, that, but for his own imprudence, Bertha might have ranked among the wealth-

iest in the land; but his increasing infirmities warned him that the act must no longer be delayed, and he had that morning, with Bertha's knowledge, communicated to Walter in writing the wish which he could not bring himself to express in words. Under these circumstances, Walter's presence brought more pain than pleasure to his father, and when he gently opened the study door, and proposed to read, Mr. Lorimer's reply sounded ungracious.

"I am not in the humour for reading, thank you, Walter. Have you looked at the papers?"

"Yes, sir, looked,—that is, not carefully, not examined," said Walter, in a disappointed tone.

"Then I wish you would; I must talk to you about them."

"There is no hurry, sir; I shall have sufficient time; you had better let me read to you."

"Thank you, Walter; surely you were able to look over the papers this morning;" and as

Mr. Lorimer spoke, his voice grew tremulous, and his eye became eager and excited.

"I began, sir,—I intended to do it," replied Walter; "but Ralph Staines was talking to Bertha, and I went out to him, and since ——"

"Since, since," repeated Mr. Lorimer, sighing heavily.

Walter was irritated; his father's annoyance seemed so much greater than the occasion demanded. He walked to the window. Bertha was standing by the porch, with a basket on her arm; she was going to the shore. His wish to be useful to his father had failed; perhaps he had better go with his sister. It would at least be kind.

"Shall you want me, sir, for the next hour or so?" he asked.

"No, Walter, no, if you will remember the papers."

"Certainly, sir, this evening."

"Why not now?"

"Bertha will walk alone, sir; I had better go with her."

The father's countenance expressed deep

vexation; the son's tone was proud and hasty. They parted. How is it, that men dare to part in anger, even for an hour; when in the counsels of the Most High it may be written, that on earth they shall never meet again?

CHAPTER IV.

THE SEA SHORE.

(Plate I.)

Ralph's home was one of a little nest of cottages clustered upon the sea shore, and inhabited only by fishermen, or, as some thought, by smugglers. It was a lonely spot at all times, yet not desolate. The warm sun shone brightly upon it in the summer, and under its influence vegetation flourished, bright flowers grew in the little gardens, creepers clung to the rough whitewashed walls, and a few herbs were cultivated, even to the foot of the sandy cliff; and in the depth of winter, when the waves tossed themselves in fury over the sea-weed-covered rocks, and broke in sheets of foam upon the stones and shingles, there was still something of security and protection in the tall cliffs, which rose immediately behind, and the dwellers in the secluded spot were

drawn more closely to each other by the barrier which shut them out from the sight, and in some cases, from the knowledge of the rest of the world.

Early in the afternoon of the day on which Ralph had visited the farm, two boats were seen enlivening the broad expanse of sea which spread before the cottages. A man standing upright in one, lying close in upon the shore, was attentively watching the movements of the other, which had just rounded the promontory, whilst from time to time, he communicated the result of his observations to his two companions, a fisherman, who was about to assist him in rowing, and a gentleman seated in the stern of the little skiff.

"Yes, it must be them, sir; there are two, a gentleman and a young lady I think. Jack, look out, will you? your eyes are younger."

"It's no use looking yet, Isaac; they are sure to come; George Thompson there"—and he pointed to a man who was talking to an old woman on a bank by the cottage—"heard the young lady tell Ralph she should be down

this afternoon, when he was stopping at the farm, to make a bargain with farmer Hollis."

"The young lady! she is more certain than master Walter," said the gentleman lightly; "but look again, now; perhaps after all they may be coming by the cliff."

"Not much likelihood of that, sir," replied Isaac, "such weather as this, when there is not enough sea to frighten a cat, and the cliffs are slippery from the dryness. Ah! that's them, I'm sure."

"Then we will wait," replied the young man, in the same careless tone, "an hour will not make much difference, and I will carry off Walter by some means."

The men threw aside their oars, and Leonard Hornsley, leaving the boat, leant listlessly against the bank, and amused himself by speculating with the fisherman upon the length of time it would take for Walter and Bertha to reach the shore.

"Bertha," said Walter, as he looked up at the dark cliffs, and then suffered his eye to ascend higher and higher into the deep blue

sky, "you are right; it is humbling, grievous, to be ruffled on such a day as this."

"And to be ruffled on any day," replied Bertha, "for the heaven above us is unchangeable."

"And earthly cares never distract you, then?"

"Yes, yes, indeed they do, lately especially."

"Why lately? what do you mean? why did you not write to me when I was away?"

"I don't know; it was not worth while, and I had Mrs. Damer and her husband to console me when I was out of spirits."

"And women are fond of telling their griefs to women," said Walter, laughingly, and unobservant of Bertha's serious manner.

"Mrs. Damer is my best friend out of my own family," replied Bertha; "her house is a home to me at all times."

"A home! but, my dear Bertha, you don't want a home, you have one."

Bertha faintly smiled. "I mean a home in every sense of the word, a place where one is understood and sympathized with."

"Then you require sympathy; but why? what are these terrible anxieties?"

Bertha's colour changed, but she evaded the inquiry.

"My father has been much worse, Walter; that is one cause for anxiety."

"He is not much worse that I can see."

"We must lose him soon," continued Bertha in an under tone.

"You will be my care, then," said Walter, earnestly.

Bertha thought she understood his meaning, and answered, "I hope you will not repent the burden, dear Walter; but the world has many claims upon a man."

She waited for some expression of affection to convince her that, whatever sacrifice he might be called upon to make for her sake, it would be made willingly. But Walter had caught sight of the little group upon the shore, and the thought of his sister was gone.

Bertha turned aside her face, and tears rushed to her eyes.

"My father is wrong," was the thought

which followed; "Walter's affection for me is nothing more than ordinary: it is not fair to be a tax upon him. The property is his by inheritance, and his it shall remain—untouched."

Bertha Lorimer was proud—dependence even upon those we love is too apt to make us so.

Walter's hand was grasped cordially as he jumped on shore. Leonard Hornsley had been expecting him a full hour; he had intended to call at the farm; and it was only by accident that he learnt it was probable some of the family would be at the fishing cottages in the course of the afternoon.

"It was happy I did hear it," he continued; "it has saved me a desperately hot walk; but I expected only to see Miss Lorimer, and leave a message." He looked round for Bertha, but she had entered the cottage.

"A charity visit, I suppose," said Leonard, rather ironically; "but, Walter, we can't let you be tied to your sister's apron strings in this way. We must have you at our pic-nic after all."

"Impossible, quite! consider my short leave."

"Short leave! absurdity! you know you will get it extended."

Walter shook his head. "They say we shall be ordered directly to Canada."

"Then go,—when they order you, go; but don't trouble yourself about it beforehand."

"My father is very unwell," said Walter.

"So you tell me always, but I shall begin to think soon there is nothing in it."

"And Risingford is too far off," persisted Walter; "ten miles beyond your house: it is not as if I could return the same day."

"No, of course it is not. When we have you, we shall keep you; but you can hear as often as you like."

"That will not do, Leonard; no, I must give it up."

Bertha now came out of the cottage, and Walter went to meet her.

"It is a very bad case," she said; "worse than Ralph represented. Oh! Walter, I do begin to wish we had money."

"But what can we do?" inquired Walter,

drawing his purse from his pocket, and unmindful of the sneer which was upon Leonard Hornsley's face.

"I cannot tell; I must go and see for some one to look after the children; the woman is dying."

Walter was shocked, and asked, "what would become of Ralph?"

"It is not for him I care so much just now," replied Bertha: "his daughter is suffering dreadfully, and they do not know how to help her."

"Quick, Walter, quick," said Leonard; "you must say, yes."

"No," replied Walter decidedly; and he looked at Bertha with an air of self-approbation. She was gone to inquire of the man and woman who were still standing near the cottage gate, what would be the most speedy way of procuring medical aid.

"Is there no one to send to Welhurst?" she said to him as Walter drew near.

Before a reply could be made, Walter in-

terposed. "Send me, Bertha: I will row back presently."

"Come, Walter, I am waiting," cried Leonard Hornsley. Walter put up his hand to silence him.

"It would be a great help if you would go," said Bertha, eagerly.

"I will be off in a moment." He ran to the shore, the two boats were lying together.

"This one, Walter," said Leonard, pointing to his own; "just get in, and we will talk over the pic-nic."

Walter's own boatmen looked at him rather eagerly, and said that they did not often have an afternoon's work; as they had brought him they should be glad to carry him back.

"Well, well," exclaimed Walter, "it is all the same; only be quick."

He was about to step in, when his eye was caught by a book lying on the seat in the other boat.

"A book, Leonard: lend it to me; it will amuse me, and I will send it back."

"Come here, then, and we will read it together," replied Leonard, who had stretched himself on a bench.

"Walter, every moment is precious," said Bertha, drawing near. Leonard Hornsley roused himself, and beckoned to him.

"The quickest boat by far, Walter; and I have some capital things to show you here;" and he held out the novel. "Come." And Walter went. Why, he scarcely knew,—he never thought—and the boat glided swiftly over the waters, and Bertha watched it till it was out of sight, and then returned to the cottage.

In the short space of twenty minutes they had reached Welhurst. Walter was about to spring on shore when Leonard stopped him.

"Let one of the men go with the message to the doctor," he said, "for we have no time to spare. You are coming on with me: my mother's carriage will be waiting."

"But I am not expected," replied Walter.

"Of course you are, I was sent after you expressly."

"But, Bertha,—" replied Walter. "No, I must be firm."

"Then at least come up to the hotel with me, and make your own excuses. Look, I have written on this card the message to the doctor, and the boat will wait to convey him back. Come on." Again Walter obeyed.

"Mr. Lorimer," said Mrs. Hornsley, leaning out of her carriage window and extending her hand, "this is most kind; we were upon the point of starting. See, here is your vacant seat. Leonard will drive." Walter began to excuse himself, but the horses were becoming restive, and Mrs. Hornsley grew frightened. "Get in, pray get in, we can talk afterwards."

"But indeed,"—and Walter turned to Leonard to support him.

"Only get in, can't you, my good fellow?" exclaimed Leonard.

"Bertha—the doctor—my dress—I'm not prepared," began Walter, entreatingly.

"It shall all be managed; don't trouble yourself. We will drive to the doctor, and send a message to your sister. Now, are you ready?" Almost forcing Walter into the carriage, Leonard took the reins, mounted the box, and drove off.

CHAPTER V.

RISINGFORD.

(Plate II.)

The Castle of Risingford had undergone many and great changes from the time when the old keep or donjon was first raised by the Saxons. It had been enlarged and fortified by the Norman Barons, beleaguered during the wars of the Roses, dismantled in the Great Rebellion, and at length, in the more peaceful times which succeeded the restoration of Charles II., suffered to fall into decay, until it had become merely a place of interest to antiquarians, and of amusement to sketchers and tourists, who clambered over the broken walls, and peeped into the old towers, and associated their own ephemeral hopes and fears with scenes where once had been acted no insignificant part of the great drama of a nation's history. Yet the life of a nation is, strictly speaking, nothing but the life of individuals; and in the sight of

that Great Being who can foresee the end of all things from their commencement, the circumstances which involve the destiny of an immortal soul must be infinitely vaster in importance than the most striking events which concern the kingdoms of this world only.

The sun was low in the West, shedding its bright rays upon the noble gateway flanked by two large round towers which, with the exception of the keep, alone remains, to show with certainty the grandeur that the castle once boasted. The heavy wicket gate was closed, and the deep archway shrouded in gloom ; yet sounds of mirth were heard amongst the ruined walls, shouts of laughter rose from time to time upon the breeze, and full and sweet the glad tones of music fell upon the ear. There came a pause, a stillness, as though something startling and unforeseen had occurred to put a stop to mirth ; then, words of hasty command, a kind parting, and the trampling of horses' hoofs. The party seemed dispersed ; their voices were heard in different directions amongst the ruins ; and

two, who had clambered upon the summit of the broken walls, looked down with something of pity and interest upon the deep stony road which led from the castle. A minute afterwards, the massive gates were unbarred, and, spurring his spirited horse to its full speed, Walter Lorimer waved his hand as a hasty farewell, and rushed madly down the hill. Well might he ride desperately. His father lay upon his death-bed. Five and twenty miles, long and wearisome, were before him, the evening was coming on; his horse, fresh and vigorous though it seemed, had already travelled nearly half the distance; and Bertha's note,—those few despairing lines, they spoke not a word of hope. Walter had endured but few reproaches of conscience since he so weakly yielded to his friend Leonard's entreaties. There seemed nothing very wrong in what he had done; his friends were kind, his companions cheerful; dancing and laughter and conversation filled the idle hours, and the succeeding day's expedition was entirely successful. No temper, no annoyance, the ruins

interesting and picturesque, the party full of excitement and pleasure. He sat at Mrs. Hornsley's right hand, at the head of the long rustic table spread in the open court-yard. His vanity was flattered, and his spirits were proportionately raised. Two letters were suddenly put into his hand: they were brought by a special messenger: one appeared a letter of business. He was just going to break the seal, when his eye fell upon the handwriting of the other. The current of his ideas was changed. He tore open Bertha's note, gathered its alarming contents at one rapid glance, and sank back in his chair pale and trembling. His sister's writing was scarcely legible from agitation, but it told him that his father's illness was most dangerous and increased by his absence. All other circumstances were in an instant forgotten, and Walter thrust the accompanying letter into his pocket unread, mounted his horse, and galloped from the castle.

For once his whole mind was concentrated on one purpose, to reach the farm, to see his

father, to obtain his blessing, his forgiveness for all the grief which he had ever caused him.

Even then, as he rode at full speed in the dim twilight, his brain giddy with the rapid motion, and the faint images of gaiety and beauty which yet haunted him, remorse was busy at his heart. No great sins rose up before him; but, clear and distinct, following each other in sad array, and standing out vividly as if only the previous day had seen them committed, came the memories of his early offences; all his neglect, his wilfulness, his indolent yielding to evil habits; and that last cold parting—it seemed the most ungrateful, the most to be lamented of all.

On he rode,—every step, as it brought him nearer to his home, making his heart beat quicker and fainter. He was still seven miles distant: his horse's strength seemed flagging.

It was dark, for the moon had not yet risen; but the stars shone out brightly in the depth

of the purple heavens, and the air was soft and warm, and the nightingale's song cheered the silence of the summer night.

Seven miles! it seemed as if they would never end.

How awful were the shadows which lay around him! how vague and mysterious the gleaming of the moon when at length it rose! how overwhelming the height of the over-arching sky and the pale lustre of the mighty universe of worlds above his head! Walter felt it all; but he was too miserable for thought. A life of warning and experience seemed concentrated in those short moments. He drew near his home; every tree was as the face of a familiar friend, but sad and silent.

The moon passed behind a cloud, and Walter's faint flickering hope vanished with it; and when again it froke forth, its quiet rays fell upon the white tombstones in the little churchyard.

Walter dismounted, and fastened his horse to the garden gate; the porch door was open,

and two persons were standing in the hall. He recognized a voice he knew,—the voice of a clergyman. The light of a lamp shone upon his face: it was sorrowful and awe-struck, and he laid his hand upon Walter's arm to stop him. But Walter shook off the grasp. For one instant he paused, and a question rose to his lips, but he dared not utter it, and, pushing aside the servant who stood in his way, he ascended the staircase. His heavy tread echoed drearily along the passage which led to his father's chamber; he reached the end, the door was open, and he stood motionless upon the threshold. Within there were low solemn voices, and half-stifled sobs, and then a wild shriek of anguish broke upon the stillness, and Bertha, roused from the stupor of grief, threw herself upon the bed, and pressed her lips to the clay-cold forehead, and clasped the lifeless form which was all that remained to her of her father.

"Bertha," said the gentle voice of the only friend who had been with her in her hour of trial; "dearest Bertha, will you not come with me?"

An hysterical sob was the only answer; and Mrs. Damer put her arm round her, and attempted to force her to rise. At that instant Walter entered; he advanced slowly to the foot of the bed, and stood, his glazed eye fixed upon the rigid features changed by the fearful unalterable power of death; and then he sank on his knees, and prayers and tears of agony relieved the extremity of his grief.

"Bertha," said Mrs. Damer again, bending down to the unhappy girl, whose face was resting on her father's pillow; "your brother is come: look up, speak to him."

Bertha raised her head; an unnatural, eager expression was in her eyes, and she answered in a deep voice, "Walter left him, and he died." Her face became of an ashy paleness, and she fell back unconscious.

The remainder of the night Walter Lorimer paced his room with a steady even tread, not pausing to rest or think, not seeking to know tidings of his sister, not caring to give orders in the house of which he was now the master.

The morning slowly dawned, clear and beautiful; something of a calmer, yet of a colder, feeling stole over him. He sat down in his accustomed place; all seemed so peaceful and familiar,—yet how changed! And his sister's miserable words and her altered look! even *her* love, then, was gone from him; his presence could give her no comfort; he was solitary in the wide world. In a short time the door of Bertha's room, which was opposite to his, opened, and he heard a message delivered for Mrs. Damer. "Miss Lorimer wished to see her immediately." But Bertha did not wish to see him, and the thought rendered him desperate. He looked from the window, and watched the labourers going forth to their work; the sense of loneliness became more oppressive, and he longed to be in the fresh air amongst the open fields. A knock at the door startled him from a vague sad dream of childish days. Bertha had sent to say that she should like to see him whenever he could go to her. But Walter dreaded his sister's presence. Conscience whispered that his thought-

lessness and weakness had added misery to his father's dying hours. "He would come soon," he said; but still he lingered, and when the servant had left the room he stood again by the window. The cool air blew softly upon his fevered cheek, and it seemed that it would strengthen him for the interview. Yet he left the room and stood at the door of Bertha's chamber. Irresolution was in his every look and action. He grasped the handle, but his eye wandered down the passage seeking an excuse for delay. The loud barking of a dog was heard. The animal was his father's favourite, and Walter's heart was touched, and he ran down stairs to caress it. He found the animal whining at the garden door, and opened it to let him in. Then the impulse to refresh himself became irresistible, and he left the house. He strayed into the fields, and from the fields farther and farther into the country, until the sun was high in the heavens, and fatigue warned him to rest. As he sat down under a tree, he became aware for the first time of the distance he had gone. He would return, he

thought, immediately; but, as he put his hand into his pocket, he took out the letter which had been forwarded with Bertha's note.

Now he had time to examine it. It was an official letter, and had been missent. Walter opened it tremblingly, and it fell from his grasp. It was an order instantly to join his regiment, upon the point of sailing for Canada. The delay already incurred was greater than should have been risked. Wellhurst was close at hand, the coach which would carry him to London was, he knew, about to start. He had not another moment to spare; not one to give to Bertha, to his own affairs, to arrangements of any kind. The last tribute to his father's memory must remain unpaid, and Bertha must be left to her misery without one word of sympathy, one parting kiss of affection! Is it in judgment or in mercy that grievous punishments follow upon our failings as well as upon our sins?

That evening saw Walter Lorimer in the bustle of preparation for his voyage, having scarcely time to write a few words of expla-

nation to his sister, and drowning recollection in excitement. The next, he was sailing over the wide sea to a distant land, less fortunate than the vessel which bore him onwards; in that the haven to which his soul was voyaging was growing daily more indistinct to view; and the tempestuous waves of this troublesome world more powerful against the weakness of an unstable will.

CHAPTER VI.

THE OLD CHURCH.

(Plate VI.)

It was a gloomy afternoon in the month of November. The sky was heavily overcast, and brightened only by the lurid colour which tinged the clouds around the setting sun. The north-east wind howled amongst the branches of the trees, at times bursting into a shrill whistle, piercing as the tones of human agony; whilst the tall dark elms swayed to and fro under the power of a rising storm. Cold, gray, and dilapidated stood the old manor farm; the garden converted into a yard, the luxuriant creepers over the walls untrained; a farm in reality as well as in name; and there, by its side, stood the little church, quiet and holy, amidst the tombs of those who were laid to rest beneath its shadow. The porch door was open, and the last light of evening which brightened the rough stone floor and white-

washed walls, brought out, in strong contrast to the shadow that lay beyond, the beauty of the richly worked, though slightly defaced, Norman archway of the chancel. In other respects, the interior was without ornament, disfigured by high pews, and a pulpit and reading desk of unpainted deal, and, though scrupulously neat, more than usually poor in the arrangements of the altar; the uncarved oak table and rails, and the uncarpeted floor. Yet the whole was not without interest. It might have been antiquity, association, neatness and simplicity, or merely the solemnity of a consecrated building, or the natural effect of the evening hour; but something there was, in the little primitive country church, which subdued, and chastened, and elevated the feelings. Heaven was nearer, earth and its cares farther removed.

Two persons were standing within the chancel arch, their eyes riveted upon the pavement. One was a lady, bending forward with dim and tearful eyes striving to trace, by the aid of the fading light, the inscription upon

the small brass plate at her feet. A gentleman stood by her side, whose dress and manner betokened his profession as a clergyman: minutes flew by, but they neither moved nor spoke; the twilight deepened, the howling of the wind sounded drearily around the old walls; and sudden gusts burst through the open porch. The lady put her arm within her husband's, and he felt the hand which rested upon it tremble.

"It will be a fearful night," she said.

"Yes, fearful for us, but not for her. At last she sleeps in peace." Mrs. Damer's voice faltered, as she replied,—"I scarcely think of peace as yet; those hours of suffering, and the loneliness and privation are always present to me."

"And why not the strength which supported her? and the faith which converted all trials into blessings?"

"Not quite all trials; her brother's coldness, his neglect, brought her early to the grave."

"And early to her God. Bertha's proud, warm feelings might have been the source of

grievous evil, but for that one bitter disappointment."

"To leave her!" continued Mrs. Damer in a musing tone, "to make no settlement, no arrangement, never to inquire what provision remained for her; to suffer her slender means to dwindle away day by day; to know that her health was failing, and still to pursue his thoughtless, expensive course; pretending affection, and leaving her to destitution! Walter Lorimer will one day have a grievous account to give."

"We will speak of charity, not of reproach, in the house of God," replied her husband, as he gently withdrew her from the spot. They walked slowly down the aisle; the moaning of the wind grew louder; its wail more sharp and thrilling; then, as they stood together in the porch, there was a sudden lull, and, as if by one consent, they stopped to look forth into the cold, misty twilight.

"See, Charles, how grim and ghastly it stands!" said Mrs. Damer, pointing to the old farm; "the type of their ruined fortunes."

There was a faint groan near; or was it but the sighing of the storm? Mrs. Damer started, and looked around, but they seemed alone. "I strive to think of her as I know she is," she continued, clinging more closely to her husband; "bright and glorious; but that last hour comes before me;—the small, wretched lodging, and the want of the common comforts of sickness, and the steward's grandchild her only help. And, again, I see her lying in her coffin; and now we are leaving her to the pitiless storm. Even for Walter Lorimer, I could wish no greater punishment, than to feel as, in my faithless heart, I have felt."

It was a groan! a groan of human suffering, or remorse, which mingled with the hollow murmurs of the wind. A man stepped from behind the porch, and walked quickly to the other side of the churchyard. Mr. Damer watched him, thinking he might return; but he waited in vain. The stranger leant over the low wall which separated the churchyard from the farm; but he did not once turn his head

until the gate closed behind the clergyman and his wife. Then he came back to the church. He paused an instant before entering, and sat down on a bench. His strength appeared forsaking him, and the pale light which yet lingered in the sky threw a ghastly glare upon his face.—Walter Lorimer's face!—how pale! how haggard and despairing! Oh! bitter memories of youth! who can endure their upbraidings, when first they waken us to the knowledge that our early, unregarded, unacknowledged sins have been the misery of those who have loved us!

Walter rose slowly from his seat, and pushed open the heavy door. Nearly two years had passed since last he heard the deep dull sound with which it closed. He strode up the aisle, his boots clanking loudly upon the stone floor, and seeming strangely irreverent in that house of prayer; and then he paused and looked around him. The few monuments upon the wall were familiar to him; he had known them from childhood; and the half defaced letters upon the floor,—they were scarcely

visible in the twilight, but the touch of centuries was upon them. He moved aside, and there, beneath him, trodden under his feet, lay the simple inscription,—"Sacred to the memory of Bertha Lorimer." Walter threw himself upon his knees, and prayed for mercy, comfort, strength, that he might bear his trial; and the twilight deepened into darkness, and the storm raged wildly without; the wind rocked the belfry, and tore off the tiling from the roof and strewed branches of the elms upon the ground; and the rain beat in torrents against the windows, and hailstones threatened to break them with their force; but still Walter knelt upon his sister's grave, and bowed his forehead to the earth, and prayed that the lesson of that hour might never pass from his mind,—and why?

We will follow him to his own chamber, the room which for that one night only he occupied in the old farm. Papers, bills, letters, were on the table; they had been awaiting his arrival in England, and had been delivered to him only a few hours before. But Walter

could as yet give his attention to one subject only. Bertha's diary lay open before him. There were passages in it which seemed to write themselves in burning characters upon his brain.

"June 18.—The day of my father's funeral: the worst is over now, and I am alone. I must learn to think that it is not alone; perhaps for that reason the trial is ordained. Walter's letter ought to satisfy me, but it does not. It seems that common humanity would have urged him to see me when I sent for him. Still I fancy he may be able to return; and I listen; but all is silent,—silent with death.

"July 20.—By searching in Walter's room I have found some law papers, and my dear father's letter entreating him to provide for me. Walter must have put them aside after reading them. His having seen them saves me from a great difficulty. The papers have been sent to the lawyers; the letters I have kept. Nothing now is my own, but my uncle's legacy."

Then came intimations of disappointed hopes

in not seeing or hearing from him; of embarrassed circumstances; of removing from the old farm house to a lodging in Welhurst; of wounded affection, and mental struggles; of plans to support herself as a governess or companion; and soon passages which told of declining health and strength, of increased penury, of having no one to minister to her necessities, but Ralph's little granddaughter, of Mrs. Damer's kindness, and of the consolations of religion, administered by her husband. At last Walter read the following:—

"Hope is sent at last, the brightest hope that could be granted. I forced my doctor to-day to tell me his opinion of my case. He shook his head. And then I asked if it could be long? He little knew the thrill of happiness which his answer gave me. A few weeks only! Yet, afterwards, as I sat alone in the dim evening light, awful thoughts overwhelmed me. Who could face death but for the certainty of a Saviour? 'Enter not into judgment with Thy servant, O Lord, for in Thy sight shall no man living be justified.'

"Oct. 30.—Walter is on his way home. My heart throbbed with delight when I heard it; but ere he can reach England, I may be safe in 'the land which is very far off.' Yet to have seen him once more, to have told him how dearly I loved him through all, to have given him my last warning,—my blessing, would it not have afforded me peace in my dying hour? It is ordered, and therefore it is best,—it must be best.

"Nov. 6th.—I feel myself sinking rapidly; but I want for nothing. I can read the events of my short and troubled life, and see that they have been the ladder on which my spirit has mounted upwards to God. To-morrow, Mr. Damer has promised that I shall receive the Holy Communion. I had one longing, one intense longing, that Walter could be with me; but even that is gone. There is One who is all in all. To God's mercy and protection I commit my darling Walter."—And there was no more,—no record of the failing moments of that lone and wounded spirit, save in the sealed Book, in which it is written how the saints

of God have struggled, and conquered, and died.

It is said that from that hour Walter Lorimer was a changed man. There is reason for hope and belief that it was so. The consequences of our faults are sometimes unveiled to us in mercy, and branded upon our memories and our consciences, with the anguish of a keen but salutary remorse. Yet, a parent's life saddened, his deathbed unsoothed, a sister brought to poverty, perhaps to death—who would not tremble to cause such fearful suffering by the indulgence of a single sin, even with the certainty (which none can have) of at length attaining to the repentance over which there is joy in Heaven?

THE EMBLEMS OF LIFE.

"The whole world is a picture, and all the things we see with our eyes speak something to the mind to instruct and improve it.

JONES OF NAYLAND.

THE EMBLEMS OF LIFE.

THE INTRODUCTION.

"The Emblems of Life"—this inscription caught my attention as I was carelessly turning over the leaves of a portfolio, watching the entrance of my friend B——. It was annexed to a small parcel tied with black tape, which appeared to contain some five or six drawings. I forgot for the moment that, as I was in my friend's study, the sketches might not be designed for public inspection, and in a fit of mere idle curiosity undid the fastening.

There was nothing in the drawings themselves to remind me of my intrusion. They were very beautifully executed, and yet it was with a feeling approaching to disappointment that I looked at them. Some were of scenes with which I myself was familiar; and I con-

jectured that the whole set, which proved to consist of six drawings, was the memorial of a tour in the Isle of Wight. I had expected something totally different, and was beginning to fancy that the inscription on the paper which contained them had been placed there by accident, when a corresponding mark on the drawings themselves convinced me that it must be the result of design. I observed in the left hand corner at the foot of five of them a title which seemed intended to afford some clue to their signification. The words, "Childhood,"—"Youth,"—"Manhood,"—"the Decline of Life,"—"Old Age,"—very faintly traced in pencil characters, with the initials A. M., were written severally upon them. The sixth drawing alone was without an inscription.

There could then be no doubt that each drawing was supposed to be an emblem of the era of life whose name it bore. But my perplexity was rather increased than relieved by the discovery; for, with the exception of the second of the number, which represented a

figure on horseback apparently in the prime of youth, the sketches seemed to have little or no connection with the periods to which they were assigned. I had taken up the first to examine it more closely, and my attention became so absorbed that I did not observe my friend's entrance until I was startled by the sound of his voice.

"Curiosity its own punishment," he said good-humouredly, as he took the picture from my hand; "I was once as puzzled as yourself, and even now should shrink from an attempt to explain their meaning.

I apologized for the liberty of which I had been guilty; and yet could not help adding, in the hope of eliciting some explanation, "Then the sketches are not your own?"

"No," he replied, "they belonged to a distant relative, who, when I was left without home or friends, adopted me as his own child. He died before I was old enough to be aware of the debt of gratitude I owed him; and I only remember him as a kind-hearted solitary man. But you will not wonder that I look

back with a feeling approaching to reverence on every thing connected with his memory. I found these sketches a few years since in a drawer which contained his private papers, and some memorials of his early years."

He paused, as though doubtful whether to explain further; and, in the hope of leading him on, I observed that they appeared to me to be views of the Isle of Wight, and that I was familiar with many of them. But the remark had the opposite effect to that which I had intended it to produce.

"Very likely," he said, dryly; "other people have told me the same thing, and as my adopted father passed the last years of his life in the island, it is by no means impossible."

He now began to replace the drawings in their cover. I was, however, still unwilling to drop the conversation. "They were sketched probably by your relative himself," I said; "they are certainly very beautiful."

But this remark was not more successful than the former. He merely answered that his relative himself had been unable to use the

pencil at all ; and that he had discovered from an old letter in the same drawer that these sketches had been given him by a friend who died shortly after their execution. I observed that his death must have invested them with a peculiar interest, and then ventured to inquire "whether the relation to whom he referred had given them their title of the emblems of life."

"No," he replied, "the inscription on the cover is my own."

"And the pencil marks on the drawings themselves?" I said. "Are in the handwriting of my adopted father," he answered, "and the initials also are his own. But both the one and the other are so faintly traced, that they appear to be a private memorandum, and never to have been intended to attract the attention of strangers."

The words seemed to hint at my own unwarrantable intrusion, though I do not imagine them to have been spoken with that design. But they gave me no opening for pursuing the conversation farther. I was silent while my

friend quietly re-fastened the tape and closed the portfolio; and then, after a vain attempt to talk on indifferent subjects, took my leave.

"Curiosity its own punishment,"—the words haunted me, and so also did the drawings. The whole of that evening I tried to unravel what my imagination magnified into an important mystery. Sometimes I fancied that my friend must have left the pictures in my way in order to amuse himself at my expense. But his allusion to his deceased relative forbade the thought. I was sure that he would not connect his recollection of him with any jest, of however harmless a character. There must then be some clue to their meaning. It was quite wonderful how distinct the pictures themselves grew in my memory as I thought them over again and again. But still the figure on the white horse was the only resting-place. It was followed by a kind of moving panorama of trees, churches, towers, and ships; and I tried in vain to arrange and separate them into the five eras of life.

THE SIX PICTURES.

The following morning I again called on my friend with the express object of asking him to gratify my curiosity. He seemed at first surprised at my visit, but his face brightened before I had got through the apology with which I prefaced my request.

"What," he said with a smile, "you no longer look upon them as mere views of the Isle of Wight, beautifully executed! I might have explained them yesterday if I had not been chilled by such a matter-of-fact observation. But you seem now in a more imaginative humour."

As he said this he undid the fastening of the portfolio; but, again pausing before he opened it, he added, "perhaps it will be as well that, in the first place, I should tell you what little I know of my deceased relative's character and history."

"Nay then," I replied, "if it be the life of

an individual to which the pictures refer, it is no wonder that I have been unable to find the clue to their meaning. From your calling them 'the emblems of life,' I had fancied them to be of universal application."

"And so I conceive that they are," he answered, "though, from the initials annexed, I infer that it was the image of himself which my adopted father saw reflected there. But his was no uncommon story; and the sketch which I shall give you merely forms an outline which each may fill up, and so make his own. His childhood was passed at home; and his parents survived to watch his entrance into life. He began his career with bright hopes and fair prospects, but met with many trials and disappointments. I cannot tell you their precise character; I only know that he retired from the world, and for awhile gave way to feelings of depression and despondency. But these were of no long continuance, for he was led by affliction to fix his hopes on a home beyond the grave. You see," he added, with a smile, as he opened the portfolio, "it is not a very

eventful history, and yet to my mind it is so interwoven with these emblems, that I seem to myself to have been telling the story of the drawings rather than that of any individual"

The First Picture.

(Plate I.)

He now placed the first picture before me, and as my eye glanced upon it I inquired whether his relative was of humble origin and had been born in the Isle of Wight. He smiled at the purport of the question, and replied, "No; he was born in an inland county; and the most eccentric imagination would find it difficult to trace the faintest resemblance between the cottage on the sea-shore and his father's spacious hall. Nor do I imagine his parents themselves would be greatly flattered at recognising their portraits in the two figures on the beach. It is true that he died in the Isle of Wight, and, in accordance with his own wish, was buried there; but his childhood, youth, and manhood were passed among

other and very different scenes. You must remember that the pictures, with the exception, perhaps, of the last, are not representations of my relative's history, but emblems of the eras of his life. And now I must ask you to examine the first attentively before I endeavour to interpret it."

"Nay," I replied, "the examination is unnecessary; I inspected it carefully in my former visit, and it is, in truth, a picture which, once looked upon, is not easily forgotten. There are high cliffs in the back ground, which seem to shut out the world, in order that the eye may rest on a home-scene of tranquillity and repose. A picturesque cottage nestles itself beneath them. Two prominent figures stand before it side by side. A boat is stranded near the shore. One sailor appears in mere listlessness to hold an oar, while another seems on the point of pushing forth into deeper water. The waves dash merrily by it, and their white surge gives a life and gladness to the picture that would otherwise be wanting. A second boat is seen in the

distance; and one can almost envy the passengers whom it bears, the quiet and happy scene that must now open to their view."

"You have described it well," he said, "and I believe not without a perception of its emblematic meaning; for such and so tranquil is the scene that meets us at our first entrance into life. There is a barrier to separate us from the cares of the world; and all that the eye rests upon is comprised in the three happy words of father, mother, and home. And yet it is a seclusion unattended with sadness; and this is one of many features that distinguishes the present from the fourth drawing. In that there is stillness as well as solitude; but in this we can conceive an emblem of the restlessness and joyous spirits of childhood in the waves that chase one another on the shore, and the ceaseless murmur of the waters.

"But the two boats," I said, "what do they signify?"

"They are emblems that have perplexed me," he replied; "but if we set aside the one in the distance as a mere representation of the

voyage of life, the other will give us little difficulty. It connects itself partly with the aimlessness of the pursuits of children, and partly with the preparation for future exertion. Many of their little plans and schemes in which they mimic the occupations of men, might come under the figure of navigating a boat, which, as yet, lies safely on the shore."

"It would," I said, "be not merely an emblem, but an actual picture of a favourite amusement of my own childhood. There is certainly enough to explain the emblematic title of the drawing. And yet I own I am still surprised at the absence of children from among the figures of which it is composed. Surely a group of them playing upon the beach would have greatly improved it as an emblem."

"Nay," he answered; "would not that have rather changed it into a representation, and so have had a tendency to injure its emblematic character? There is a like difficulty with regard to the figures in some of the other drawings. But, after all, I do not so much look for emblems in each little detail as in the

general idea they convey to the mind. Now there can be no question that in the present instance it is pre-eminently one of home happiness and seclusion. We may compare it with the description Keble has given of the mountain boy.

'The dreary sounds of crowded earth,
The cries of camp or town,
Never untun'd his lonely mirth,
Nor drew his visions down.
The snow-clad peaks of rosy-light
That meet his morning view,
The thwarting cliffs that bound his sight,
They bound his fancy too.'

"If we were merely to change the epithets of the first line of the second stanza, the verses might seem to be written for this very picture."

The Second Picture.

(Plate II.)

I certainly was struck by the resemblance, and yet more so when he placed the second picture before me, and with a smile continued the quotation—

'Oh, blest restraint, more blessed range!
Too soon the happy child
His nook of homely thought will change
For life's seducing wild:
Too soon his altered day-dreams show
This earth a boundless space,
With sun-bright pleasures to and fro
Sporting in joyous race.'

"Is there not," he asked, "a marked contrast between this and the first emblem? and yet not greater than the difference between our childhood's 'homely thoughts' and the 'altered day-dreams' of our early youth! But I must ask you to describe this picture as you did the former one."

I did so, and again in such language as I thought would best harmonize with my friend's views. Neither, in truth, was it a forced description.

"I see," I said, "a solitary figure mounted on a white horse, which is struggling against the slight restraint of the rider's hand. A bright and unbounded prospect is opening before them—there seem to be in the distance woods and hills and water and fair meadow-

ground; the richness of the foliage and the abundant vegetation speak to us of the early summer; but all is so vague and indefinite that there is no single object in front of the horseman on which the eye can rest. Behind him, an old gateway, through which he can only have just passed, is sufficiently prominent; and, I own, the first impression the sketch gave me was that of the escape of some hero of romance from an enchanted castle."

"Neither was your conjecture far from the truth," he replied, "for it is an emblem of the escape of the young man from the restraints of childhood, when he is sent forth into the world."

The white horse is the eager imagination that hurries him along. He is in the early summer of his life. He leaves a single barrier behind; while free and unbounded, and yet no less vague and indefinite than the landscape in the drawing, are the plans and prospects that open to his view. But examine it more attentively. Do you observe no other figures?

"I see two on a wall by the gateway: they

seem to be watching the youth's progress; but their forms are very indistinctly traced. Do you assign to them any emblematical meaning?" I asked.

"I do," he replied; "and the more from their very indistinctness. I conceive them to be the same two that formed so prominent a feature in the former drawing. It is in infancy and childhood that Father and Mother are all in all; they do not occupy, so to speak, the same space in the visions of youth, although their images still are there. You may perceive that the figure on horseback waves his hand to them; and seems to be riding forward with the more pride and exultation through his consciousness that every movement is observed from the gateway that he has left. One may imagine, also, how the progress of the young man is watched from that gateway with a tender and earnest gaze: the hearts of his former guardians rejoice at the bright prospect that opens before him; although, perchance, from the height at which they stand, they can see dangers and difficulties which his own eye is

not able to discern. Is it not," he said, as he once more held it before me, "a very perfect emblem? I can hardly conceive any possible improvement."

I confessed that I had no fault to find either in the general view or in the details as he had explained them, but remarked that it appeared to me defective as a representation of life. "Surely," I said, "it ought not to be all green fields and bright sunshine."

"True," he replied, "but remember it is life as it seems to be in the distance, and not as it really is. This is but the picture of the world drawn in the youth's imagination, which exhibits only—

> 'This earth a boundless space,
> With sun-bright pleasures to and fro
> Sporting in joyous race.'

"If we wish to see farther the picture of it drawn by experience, we must pass on to the next drawing."

The Third Picture.

(Plate III.)

"It is the one marked Manhood," he continued, as he placed it before me: "do you remember it?"

"Not very distinctly," I replied; "but it seemed to me of a less pleasing character than the others. It was the picture of some town; and I have a confused recollection of a carriage, and a herdsman with oxen, and various other figures apparently moving in different directions. But there was an air of stir and business in the whole scene, as well as a hardness and severity in the lines of the drawing itself, that almost made me fancy it had got into the set by accident. It possessed neither the romance of the second picture nor the repose of the rest."

He again smiled as he once more repeated from his favourite poet the lines—

> 'Sweet is the infant's waking smile,
> And sweet the old man's rest,
> But middle age by no fond wile,
> No soothing calm, is blest.

Still in the world's hot restless gleam
She plies her weary task,
While vainly for some pleasant dream
Her wandering glances ask.'

"Yes," he added, in a graver tone, "such is manhood, and such our every-day experience of life. The middle picture may well differ in its whole character from the rest; for it could not be a true emblem if it were not thus hard and severe. There is a colouring of poetry shed not only on the bright vision of hope, but on the saddened retrospect of memory, which is wanting in our actual intercourse with the world. But examine the drawing more closely.

"I observe," I said, "an unusual number of trees, especially at the entrance of the town: their foliage is even more abundant than that in the former drawing."

"They are probably inserted to denote the season of the year," he replied. "The town, taken by itself, must have failed to represent any distinct period of life; but the appearance of summer at once gives the idea of manhood. You know Thomson describes it as 'our sum-

mer's ardent strength.' And a like image is suggested under the metaphor of the 'world's hot restless gleam,' in the lines which I have just quoted."

"The explanation is ingenious," I remarked, doubtingly.

"Nay," he said, "more than ingenious; it must have some foundation in truth. Consider how entirely the whole effect of the drawing would have been altered by the slightest sign of winter. It would then have been impossible to regard it as an emblem of manhood. But let us pass on to the buildings. Is there not one in this picture more prominent than the rest?"

"You mean," I said, "the church."

"I do," he replied. "And there is little need for me to dwell on the analogy that it suggests, for it is the same in almost every town. The church rises above the buildings by which it is surrounded; and when the eye once rests upon it, becomes the most prominent feature in the view. And yet those who throng the streets fail to perceive it, because there are other

nearer objects which arrest their attention and perhaps keep it altogether from their sight. So also the things of Heaven are too often hidden from us by the care and turmoil of life."

After a pause, during which I followed in my own mind the train of thought which this observation called forth, I inquired whether he considered the grouping of the figures to be the result of design or accident.

"They appear to me," was his answer, "to represent mankind generally, and to be so contrived as to include all the various classifications of them. Thus—there are men, women and children—there is the husbandman with his cattle, and the citizen—there is the rich man and the poor man—the busy and the idle—they all too are moving in different directions—each intent on his own occupation;—and so is it with the world."

I fancied I observed a hesitation in his voice and manner, as though he had left something unsaid, and I inquired whether he considered any particular figure to represent his own relative.

"Not in the present picture," he replied. "He is here lost to me. During his manhood I know nothing of his actual history beyond the simple fact that he was absorbed in the business of life. But in the next emblem I can see him distinctly. He there again begins to have, as it were, an individual existence."

"Still," I said, "in the drawing now before us, are there none of the figures to which you attach some particular signification? I had fancied from your manner it was otherwise."

"Nay, if you press me for my own opinion," he answered, "I confess that I regard the two most prominent as distinct emblems; I mean the beggar and the rich man. Observe how they are moving in opposite directions—the one towards the church, the other away from it. Under this view the former may represent the "poor in spirit," the latter those who "trust in riches." But as I before said, I would not so much dwell on the details of the drawings as on the general idea which they convey. In this respect at least you

cannot but admit that the three first are in harmony with the eras of life to which they are assigned. First, there is the quiet seclusion of childhood;—next, the enthusiasm and bright prospects of youth;—and next, the matter of fact scene which meets us in actual life. Let us now pass on to the fourth picture."

"Pardon me," I said, "for asking one question more; but you have taken no notice of the sea-view which lies beyond the town."

"The omission was accidental," he replied, "and I should not have failed to allude to it in the explanation of the next drawing, for it there becomes a more prominent feature. I regard it as an emblem of the visions on which, at times, the imagination dwells, and the quiet future which it creates for itself in spite of the stir and tumult of the present hour. The thoughts even of the most worldly are not really occupied with the scenes which immediately surround them. Each has his sea-view in the distance, and the vessels of hope are sailing upon it."

The Fourth Picture.

(Plate IV.)

I now examined the fourth picture. It was, like the first, a sea-view; but every sign of life and animation appeared studiously to have been withdrawn. There was no ripple of waves along the shore, and far as the eye could reach, the whole expanse of water lay so calm and motionless, that it seemed like a mirror reflecting the objects which passed across its surface. On a smooth down immediately above an undulating cliff, the figure of a man reclined in a listless attitude, with a boy standing by his side. The form of a single ship was seen in the distance. The man's finger pointed towards it, but his face was turned away and fixed sorrowfully upon the child. A tall solitary tower rose near them; while a subdued light was shed on every object by the sun, which was already sinking beneath the quiet waters.

"It is, indeed," I said, "a scene which speaks to us of languor and decline!"

"There is not one in the whole series," he replied, "in which the emblematic character is more perfectly sustained. I hardly like, even in my own mind, to analyze the component parts, lest we should lose sight of the harmony that pervades them all;—the setting sun is an emblem of the evening of life—the calm water, of its stillness—the reclining figure, of its repose—the vessel in the distance, is hope passing away; while the little child may, perhaps, be the image brought back by memory of former years."

"And," I added, "the countenance of the figure is averted from the vessel and turned towards the child."

"Yes," he replied; "for, as I told you, my relation gave way to feelings of despondency when first he retired from the world. He might, therefore, be truly represented as turning aside from the future, and gazing sadly upon the past. But there is one of the most prominent objects in the drawing, to which I have not yet alluded."

"You mean," I said, "the tower; and I be-

lieve I can guess the meaning you assign to it. It is, I presume, a similar emblem with the church in the former picture."

"It is so," he replied, "and a no less appropriate one. I regarded it at first merely as a lighthouse, and even then it seemed an apt image of that which alone stands unshaken by the waves and storms of life, and out of the midst of the surrounding darkness affords the mariner an unfailing light to guide him on his way. The very contrast of the setting sun, reminding us of the approach of night, appears to give a peculiar force and beauty to the emblem."

"Undoubtedly," I answered; "but why do you say that you at first regarded it as a lighthouse; surely it must be designed to represent one?"

"The building was probably used as such," he replied; "but there is another explanation of the tower, no less in harmony with its emblematic character. It appears to have formed part of some ecclesiastical building. A friend, more familiar than myself with the scenery of the Isle of Wight, has informed me that an

Oratory was originally connected with it, the form of which may still be distinctly traced."

"Pardon me," I replied, "do I rightly understand you? Are these emblematical drawings also actual scenes?"

There was a slight embarrassment in his manner as he replied, "I cannot deny them to be so, for persons acquainted with the places they represented, have repeatedly assured me of the fact. You, yourself," he added with a smile, in allusion to our former conversation, "are among the number. You know you praised them as views of the Isle of Wight, and called them beautifully executed."

"But do you not," I said, "suppose them to have been originally designed as emblems?"

"To be candid with you," he replied, "it is a question that I avoid; and it was your familiarity with some of the actual scenes that made me unwilling to enter on the subject of the pictures during your former visit. I was afraid lest, like many others, you should persist in regarding them as the memorials of a summer tour, and look on their emblematic colouring

as a mere delusion. And yet, if it be so," he continued after a pause, as though arguing against his own secret doubts, "it is certainly singular that the contrast between the different pictures should be so striking and so uniformly sustained. Thus, let us compare this with the former. In the one we have the glare of the summer sun, with the stir and confusion of crowded streets; in the other, silence, loneliness, and the quiet of the evening hour. *Here* is the busy scene of manhood, and *here* life's solitary decline;"—and then, drawing out the fifth picture, and passing his finger over the churchyard, so thickly covered with tombs, he added, "And *here*"——

I could not help finishing the sentence for him, and said, almost instinctively, "the Approach of Death."

The Fifth Picture.

(Plate V.)

"It was this picture," he said, "viewed in connection with the second, that first gave me courage to attempt to discover the emblematic

meaning of the whole series. I was struck by the contrast between the stooping figure on the dull aged horse, and the cavalier on his fiery charger, who seemed to bound forth from the gateway in all the pride and vigour of life. For, in like manner, a youth of eagerness and presumption is followed by an old age of anxiety and care."

"Do you then," I asked, "suppose that figure to represent your relative?"

"Nay," he replied quickly, "very far otherwise. I do but now speak of the first idea suggested by the drawing. But we will return to the particular figures presently. Let us first observe the general aspect of the picture. It seems as though old age had fixed its stamp on all the principal features. The churchyard with its tombstones, the tree stripped of its foliage, the group of old men near it, even the dull horse and the stiff rigid figure of the dog, are all in harmony with each other, and awaken one and the same feeling in the mind."

"Stay," I observed; "is not the fact of this

tree being without leaves a clear proof that the series of drawings were not merely the result of a tour to the Isle of Wight? for if all were sketched at the same season, we should not expect one to wear the garb of winter or autumn, and another that of summer or spring."

He seemed pleased with the observation, but, after a moment's thought, shook his head, and replied that he did not consider it conclusive.

"You know," said he, "that artists exercise their own discretion in the colouring of time and season which they shed upon their drawings. Thus, the last sketch was not necessarily taken in the evening, though the setting sun is introduced to give interest to the picture. And so, also, this might be a true copy from nature, and yet invested by imagination with its autumnal character."

"True," I said; "but with what object could the person who sketched it have made the alteration, unless in his own mind he regarded it as an emblem?"

"From a feeling," he replied, "that the close

of the year was in harmony with the scene itself. Consider how completely the whole effect of the drawing would have been altered if that tree had been covered with leaves, or a group of merry children playing around it."

"It would have been so," I answered; "and yet, surely, there is some fallacy in your reasoning. The old tree and the churchyard must in nature have had their seasons of summer and sunshine, and been cheered at times by the voices of children. How then could it have been unnatural so to have represented them?"

"I do not say that it would have been unnatural," he replied, "but only that the whole character of the drawing would have been affected by the change. The design of the person who sketched it may simply have been to invest the picture with a sad and sober air which might be in keeping with the memorials of death. And this would sufficiently account for the introduction of the figures bowed down with age, and the barren and leafless tree. However," he added, with a smile, "I am ar-

guing against my own theory; I had far sooner consider it to have been altogether designed as an emblem. Let us now examine its several features separately: of course you have no difficulty in assigning a meaning to the church?"

"The same," I replied, "which it bore in the third picture."

"Undoubtedly," he answered. "But observe what a far more prominent place it occupies in this. It has become almost a solitary object. The eye is at once arrested by its presence, for instead of streets and buildings, it is now surrounded only by the signs of death. The analogy which all this suggests to the mind is too obvious for me to dwell upon. Again, a train of yet sadder thoughts is awakened by the aged figure on horseback, which, as I said, first suggested a clue to the meaning of the drawing. Do you observe how he seems to be leaning forward, and with an anxious look detailing some little piece of news of the day? The grave may be said almost to open beneath his feet, and yet his face is turned away both from the emblems of death and the type of Heaven."

"I do not wonder," I said, "that you were unwilling to connect that figure with your deceased relative."

"No," he replied; "I find his emblem in the man who is sitting by the child. The figures themselves are different from the two in the former drawing, but their emblematic meaning is the same. The change of look and posture denotes the change that had passed over his own mind. You know I told you that his depression and despondency were but of short continuance. He had the stay of religion whereon to rest, and affliction quickly wrought the purpose for which it was sent. Resignation succeeded to disappointment. Thus, in the present picture, he is no longer represented as lying down, for he had already aroused himself from the stunning effect of his misfortunes. The child is still standing by his side, but he does not now dwell with the same fond regret that he once did on the image of the past. His face is turned in the direction of the churchyard, and he seems to me as one who is waiting quietly the approach of death, and

has fixed his thoughts on the Home beyond the grave."

"It is indeed," I said, "a very perfect and beautiful emblem."

He scarcely seemed to observe the remark, as following the train of his own thoughts, he continued, "I love to connect this emblem of my adopted father with Keble's description of a tranquil old age :—

"'How quiet shows the woodland scene!
Each flower and tree, its duty done,
Reposing in decay serene,
Like weary men when age is won.
Such calm old age as conscience pure
And self-commanding hearts ensure,
Waiting their summons to the sky,
Content to live, but not afraid to die.'"

The lines certainly were in harmony with the thoughts suggested by one portion of the drawing. But as I examined it more attentively, I could not help observing that the whole of it did not appear to be an emblem of old age. Two youthful figures were passing by the church, and there seemed to be pleasant walks in the distance, and trees that

had not yet lost their foliage. I remarked this to my friend, and said that this portion of the drawing was irreconcileable with our theory.

"Nay, rather," he replied, "say that it confirms it. I conceive the sketch in the background to represent the other paths of life, and to bring out more strongly by their contrast the principal group. The trees there, are of course covered with leaves; and the youthful figures, of which you speak, are moving towards them; and yet I own I should have been better pleased if these also had appeared in the distance. The insertion of the same pair is yet more unaccountable in the next drawing."

The Sixth Picture.

(Plate VI.)

As he said this, he produced the last of the series. It merely represented the interior of a church with two figures that seemed to be examining an inscription over a vault in the nave.

"And is this then," I said, "also an emblem? No title is assigned to it, as there is to the rest."

"No," he replied; "for it did not assume its emblematic character until the hand which marked them had lost its power; and I myself have forborne to touch it. But the vault and the church may well close the emblems of my relative's life. The one as the type of death, the other of the immortality which encompasses his tomb. And yet perhaps both this and the former picture should rather be called representations than emblems. For my adopted father spent his quiet old age in the neighbourhood of Yaverland, and used often to be seen sitting under a tree which commanded a view of the church. It was afterwards in accordance with a wish which he himself had expressed that he was buried within the walls of that building. A plain marble slab marks the place of his interment."

"And is this then," I asked, "a sketch of the interior of Yaverland church?"

"It is so," he answered.

"In that case," I said, "the picture itself certainly requires no explanation, and I do not wonder at your having added it to the series. But the introduction of the two figures is, as you say, very unaccountable."

"They certainly," he replied, "appear to me like intruders upon hallowed ground, and to be out of keeping with the scene. I should greatly prefer that there were nothing to disturb the still and solemn thoughts awakened by the contemplation of death and immortality. And yet perhaps to a stranger their presence is required."

"Why to a stranger?" I saia.

"Because, without it, there would be nothing to draw his attention to the vault where my relative is interred. It is these two figures which make the stone and inscription in the nave the prominent features in the drawing. If they were removed, it would at once become merely a sketch of the church itself, and not of any particular monument within its walls."

"Very true," I answered; "especially as

there is no writing beneath this picture to denote its emblematic character. Are you even now quite sure that it does belong to the series ?"

"Yes," he replied, "I found it lying with the rest, and have since discovered a yet more certain evidence. The allegorical titles are not the only marks which the drawings bear. If you examine the back of the paper, you will find a date upon each of them."

I took up the first drawing and turned the back of it to the light. Something did indeed seem to be traced there in pencil, but it was so very indistinct, that I tried in vain to decipher it. At length, I said, "The only mark that I can see does not look like a date at all. I should imagine it to be some word beginning with the letter '*F*.'"

"Exactly so," he replied. "I like to call it a date, but it is in truth a Latin word denoting the progress of time. Examine the fourth drawing, and you will have less difficulty."

"*Fuit*," I at once exclaimed; "and doubtless it is the same word that is on the first."

"It is so," he answered; "and also on the second and third. The characters gradually increase in distinctness as we advance, as though my relative instinctively wrote more faintly in describing the more distant eras. But now turn to the fifth drawing, and you will find a change both in the inscription and the way of writing it."

I looked and immediately read the word "*Est.*" The hand was the same; but the letters were larger, and clearly and distinctly drawn. "This then," I said, "denotes time present, as the former did time past."

"Exactly so," he replied: "and though there be no title, there is a corresponding mark on the sixth drawing; the future tense of the same verb is there, and proves it to belong to the same series." As he said this he pointed to the word "*Erit,*" on the back of it. "You will observe," he continued, "that it is written with no faint and wavering hand, but in characters quite as distinct as the "*Est*" of the preceding picture. There is something to me very soothing in this circumstance, trivial as it seems, and

I love to dwell upon it. It assures me that while my adopted father could trace but feebly in the earlier drawings the emblems of the distant past, the fifth and sixth alike presented clear and certain images to his mind. As he found in the one an exact delineation of the present, so also could he look forward calmly and steadfastly to a type of the future in the other."

CONCLUSION.

It was not many months after the above conversation that I determined on making a tour through the Isle of Wight. I did not take the sketches with me; my friend was unwilling to part with them; and the image they had left on my mind was so distinct that I did not require them. He gave me, however, a list of the places of which they were supposed to be views by persons familiar with the Island scenery. They were as follows,—Luccombe Chine, Carisbrooke, Ventnor, St. Catherine's, and Yaverland. I endeavoured to persuade him to accompany me, but he declined. "It may be," he said, "that the regarding the pictures as emblems is after all fanciful, and, should it prove so, I have no wish for the reality to dispel the delusion."

I myself was not altogether free from a similar fear, but the event showed it to be groundless. It is true that a single glance

convinced me that the drawings were really taken from nature. Still to my mind they continued emblems; for imagination shed her friendly colouring on the actual scenes, and they too became emblematic. It was not Luccombe, or Carisbrooke, or Ventnor, or St. Catherine's, that I saw; but the seclusion of childhood. the boundless prospects of youth, the glare and bustle of middle age, and the calm retirement of the decline of life.

Such was the case with regard to the four first drawings, but the fifth proved an exception. It was obviously designed to represent Yaverland Church. There had, indeed, been an alteration since the sketch was made. The wooden belfry had been replaced by one of stone, which greatly improved the appearance of the building. But in every other respect the church itself was unchanged; and yet the whole scene failed altogether to convey the same impression as the corresponding emblem. I tried in vain to connect it with the idea of old age. It awakened no such feeling in the mind. At first I ascribed the difference partly

to the change of season, for it was now summer, and there was abundance of foliage on the trees, and partly to the absence of the group of figures which were so conspicuous in the drawing. But some yet more prominent feature appeared to be wanting. At length the truth flashed across me. The church had no burial-ground annexed to it. Thus, the tombstones which, by marking the approach of death, had so strongly imbued the picture with its emblematic character, were altogether wanting. They had, for some reason, been introduced by the artist, and appeared to afford a strong presumption that this sketch, at least, must originally have been designed as an emblem.

On my return home, I communicated to my friend the result of my tour. He listened with obvious interest to my description of the feelings awakened by the earlier scenes, but was evidently altogether unprepared for the inaccuracy in the fifth drawing. "I used," he said, "rather to wonder why my relative should have been interred within the church. The absence of a burial-ground will account

for it. But it is very singular that the artist should have introduced one into the picture."

"Nay," I replied, "it is easily accounted for. In this instance he must have deviated from nature in order to invest the picture more completely with an emblematic character."

My friend, however, shook his head, and suggested that there might, at one time, have been a burial-ground; or else that the tombstones, like the leafless tree, might have been introduced almost undesignedly, in consequence of the feelings under which the picture was drawn.

"But why," I said, "may not the alteration have been intentionally made? Do you mean that, after all, the pictures were never designed to be regarded as emblems?"

For a moment there was the same embarrassment in my friend's manner which I had once before observed, but it was now immediately succeeded by a smile of quiet satisfaction. "Your tour," he said, "has set my own mind at rest, and I will no longer hide from you what I really know of the history of the

drawings. The letter which accompanied the gift proves them to have been originally intended only as specimens of the scenery of the Isle of Wight. Nay," he continued, observing my look of disappointment, "I myself used to shrink from this as an unwelcome truth, but thanks to your tour, I no longer fear to acknowledge it. They were sent to my relative as copies from nature, but he changed them into emblems. And the result of your visit to the scenes themselves proves that to regard them as such is no idle delusion."

"You perplex me," I replied; "you say that your relative changed them into emblems; surely you have, more than once, assured me that he added nothing to the drawings."

"Nothing," he answered, "save the passing shadow of his own thoughts, which he rendered distinct and permanent by assigning a corresponding title to every picture."

"Nay," I said, "now you are more ambiguous than ever. How could the thoughts of your relative produce any change in the pictures themselves?"

"I will endeavour," he replied, "to explain my meaning more clearly. All the scenes of external nature are capable of conveying not one but an endless variety of emblems to the mind. The imagination accommodates to itself the objects that meet the eye and brings them into harmony with its own feelings. To quote once more the lines of Keble:

"'Each in his hidden sphere of joy or woe
Our hermit spirits dwell and range apart,
Our eyes see all around in gloom or glow—
Hues of their own, fresh borrowed from the heart.'

Now when these drawings were first examined by my deceased relative, I believe him to have been occupied with the retrospect of his own history; and thus, while his eye rested upon them, they reflected one by one the tenor of his thoughts, and so became to him a series of connected emblems. By assigning a title to each he has enabled others to catch as it were the light under which he happened to view them, and in this way has invested them permanently with an emblematic character. Such, I believe, is the true history of the

drawings; they were originally mere representations of certain scenes in the Isle of Wight: they continue to be representations, but they are also emblems,—and remember," he added, with a smile, "that though the latter property be of later date, it is infinitely more lasting than the former. The outward aspect of Nature is continually changing. These pictures would not have been faithful representations of the Isle of Wight a century ago, neither will they be so when another century is gone. Some alterations have taken place in the few years that have already passed. But the history of man is always the same; and if we regard them as Emblems of Life, so far as they are true now, they will continue true for ever."

THE LOST INHERITANCE.

"Suffer the little children to come unto me, and forbid them not: for of such is the kingdom of God."—MARK, x. 14.

THE LOST INHERITANCE.

CHAPTER I.

ST. CATHERINE'S TOWER.

(Plate IV.)

I SUPPOSE no one can look back to his boyhood without remembering some one spot, which served him as an interior visionary world, distinct from, and happier and brighter than that visible and palpable world around him, to which we falsely give the name of real, as if nothing could be real which cannot be seen and handled. Every child has his dream-land—a place where he takes refuge from cares and sorrows, and builds up his fairy castles, to repose and revel in, till he is called back, and compelled to grapple with the stern necessities of life. And without such an asylum from sorrow,—such phantasms to rouse and feed affections which meet no sympathy

in the world,—such an exercise ground for the imagination, which, for mere want of materials, is doomed to inactivity in practice,—such hopes of brightness to relieve the dreariness of the present and the disappointments of the past,—man cannot be happy, he can scarcely live. Perhaps, also, no one has returned in after days to this scene of visionary delight—this dream-land of his boyhood,—without a strange and bitter regret to find that the spell is broken, and the charm departed; and that what before was radiant and sparkling, grand and fearful, or soothing and affecting, has now sunk down into the cold, petty, insipid cheerlessness of every day existence.

"There was a time, when meadow, grove, and stream,
The earth and every common sight,
To me did seem
Apparelled in celestial light,
The glory and the freshness of a dream.
It is not now, as it has been of yore;
Turn wheresoe'er I may
By night or day,
The things which I have seen, I now can see no more."

And when with this melancholy conscious-

ness he stands upon the same spot, which was once his haunted ground, let the adult trace back from his boyhood the struggles, the feverish pursuits, the wrestlings with wants, the yearnings and strivings after good, which have formed the business of life, and he will find them all more or less an effort to realize and embody these early visions, to recover and grasp in his hands something which he once possessed in imagination, but which slipped like a dream away, the moment he was recalled from the future and the invisible to the present and the seen. Life is throughout a struggle to recover something which was once enjoyed, though only in a dream, to regain possession of an inheritance which was once, but is no longer ours.

I was led into this train of thought, as I sat one bright and tranquil summer evening on a spot which had been to me the dream-land of my boyhood, the summit of St. Catherine's Down, the eminence which forms the most southern promontory of the Isle of Wight. The sun was rolling down its gigantic disk

into a flood of golden light, which melted together the blue waves and the pale shadowy cliffs of Freshwater into one haze of glory. All the objects which had fed my thoughts so often with imaginations of past days, and spectacles of brilliancy, and had peopled worlds with beings above humanity, lay still around me. There was that strange, pathless, treeless, solitude of smooth and thymy turf, abutting with its abrupt precipice of rock on the boundless expanse of ocean. There was the sweep of cliff and shore, jagged with headlands, each stamped with its tale of shipwreck, and fringed with yellow beach and foaming surf. There was the same deep, unwearied, mysterious roar, booming slowly and unceasingly along the strand, like a distant cannonade along the lines of battle, as each long wave rolled in, and tumbled into spray. Far off lay that dim, visionary, dreamy, line of coast, which seemed to the boy as islands never touched by man, and homes of other creatures. To the north opened the rich central basin of the island, dotted with trees and homesteads and spires,

each with its old ivied gabelled manor house nestling under its wing. And bounding this stretched the long undulating line of green downs, sloping into grassy combs, and lawns hung with ash copses, and at intervals dipping to let in a glimpse of the sail-spotted Solent, and faint-specked shores beyond it. It was strange to think how the visions and hopes which used to be called up by each of those objects, from the shattered obelisk on the summit of Appuldercombe Park, and the dim haze hanging over the mouth of the Medina, to the long line of rough-hewn lichened wall, which alone broke the level expanse of turf before me, had hung over the whole of my life, shaping and guiding almost every thought and action which aimed at a work to be performed. Memory had fed hope, and hope fed energy. The remembrance of the enjoyment of dreams, and of the dreariness and disappointment felt in waking from them, had been the main spring of action. And work after work had been attempted, and dream after dream realized. And on each came a fresh waking, fresh disappointment, and fresh dreariness; till at last the work

had been found, not which the imagination coveted, but which Heaven appointed, and here at last was reality and truth. The inheritance of boyhood had been recovered!

While the thought was still dwelling on my mind, a sunbeam fell upon the old venerable buildings beneath me of Chale Priory, which, though degraded into unworthy purposes, still preserves traces of its former religious destination. And there also men had lived in centuries bygone, who had fled from the world into solitude; had macerated themselves with self-invented austerities; had stripped themselves of all the luxuries of life; and knelt, and prayed, and fasted, and watched, for one object, with one hope,—to recover an inheritance in old age, which they had possessed, and had lost in youth—the innocence of childhood, the purity of their baptismal robe. And among them had been minds of other temper, yet with the same hope, who had alike lost their inheritance, and alike strove to regain it, but to regain it by more practical and social duties,—who fasted that they might feed the hungry, laboured with their own hands that they might give to the

poor; raised piles not for solitary asceticism, but for the welfare, and instruction, and blessing of man; and kept vigils, (I was sitting under that old, mysterious, weather-beaten, buttressed tower, which crowns the top of the eminence,) kept vigils as they had done,—who used to pass night after night in that lonely watchtower to join prayers for the preservation of the mariner, with toils to keep alive the beacon burning in its summit. They also were struggling to recover a lost inheritance. Was it an inheritance of this world? The church's inheritance—its sway over the nations of the earth, the rule of minds promised and subjected to it by God, its hold over wills and affections, which passion, or pride, or ignorance, were tempting to rebellion? Or was it the simple, lowly, truthful inheritance of the kingdom of God, to be attained by witnessing to truth, and dying for it in this world, and to be enjoyed in glory and power only beyond the grave?

The question was still unanswered, when I heard a voice on the other side of the tower, and moving round became rather intrusively a

listener to what was passing between a gentleman, who was half sitting and half lying on the sloping turf, and a little boy, I imagined about five years old, who stood by him. Just as I came in sight of them, the gentleman turned round so as to give me a view of his features. They were handsome, vigorous, and marked with high birth and blood; but the brow was furrowed, the eye deep-set, the lips compressed as with constant care, and the complexion sallow as of one whose days had been passed in the close air of marts and cities; but I could trace at once his likeness in the curling hair, and high forehead, and beautiful face of the child, though, over that face, exquisite as it was for a picture, there hung that singular mysterious sadness and reserve, that seeming unwillingness to mingle with other minds, and that tendency to commune within itself and brood over deep thoughts, which is often found in children destined to an early grave. The father had been sitting for some time in thoughtfulness and silence, while the child had been standing at a little distance looking at a pet

lamb which had lost its mother, and apparently was dying from some internal injury. At times the gentleman rose up, and with a telescope which he held in his hand swept the panorama beneath him, fixing earnestly on some few spots, but always returning to a ship, which, in the distance, was making towards the Needles. Then he would turn to look for his child, as if he would willingly have spoken to it of the thoughts within him, but doubted if he should be understood. And as his eye rested on his son, I could see in it a mixture of pride, and exultation, and anxiety, which told more of some personal selfish ambition, than of the real affection of a parent. At last he seemed unable to resist the impulse, and called the child to him.

"Leonard, my boy, come here, I want to speak to you."

The child looked as if he would rather have stayed by the poor lamb, but obeyed the call, though with evident timidity.

"Leonard, my child," said the father, "do you see that ship out there?"

"Yes, papa."

"And do you know whose it is?"

"No, papa."

"What should you say, my boy, if it were your own papa's?"

But the child only replied, "I do not know, papa."

There was no amazement or delight, such as the father had anticipated. If any surprise existed, it was that any should be expected. The father seemed chilled and disappointed, but after a pause continued,

"And what should you say, Leonard, if there were thousands of pounds in it, and all belonging to Leonard's papa, and intended for Leonard himself?"

But once more the child only answered that he did not know. The intelligence seemed to have no charm for him.

The father was evidently irritated at the child's insensibility. And with a mixture of impatience he drew him nearer, and placed him on his lap.

"And do not you know, Leonard, what is the good of having all that money? Are you not obliged to your papa for working so hard all day long to get it for you?"

"Thank you, papa," said the child; but the answer was timid. The boy had evidently never been taught to feel a warm affection for his parent, or confidence in his presence.

"Shall I tell Leonard, what papa means to do with it?"

"But papa, if the ship should run upon the rocks or sink. Do not ships ever sink?" asked the child.

The father shrunk at the words, and made a movement to put the boy down, but checked himself.

"It won't sink, my boy. There is no fear of it's running on the rocks. And now I will tell you what is to be done with all that money. Look out there, Leonard, do you see out there by those white cliffs behind you? there are some trees, and in them a little white cottage, and a small church, and an old gray farmhouse, Yaverland, where nurse took you the other day. Do you know who used to live there?"

"Nurse said, papa, it was my great-great-grand-uncle, and that I was to live there some day or other."

The father smiled, and his eye lighted up as he pressed the child to him.

"Yes, my boy, that great house and all the lands all round belonged to your great-great-grand-uncle. And they ought to belong to you now. And they will belong to you when that ship comes into harbour, for papa intends to buy them all with the money in the ship. Shall you not like it?"

But the child only looked wistfully in his father's face, and answered "I do not know."

"Not know?" asked the father fretfully; "should not you like to have all that property, like your ancestors? and to do what you liked with it? and to have every one obeying you and looking up to you, as they did to Lord Lisle, your great ancestor, when he had those estates, and was governor of the whole island, and lived in that great castle, where I took you the other day, Carisbrooke Castle?"

"Was that the place where the donkey was that drew water?" asked the child; "I should like to see the poor donkey again, for he was so hungry, and I gave him some gingerbread;

and do you know, papa, he ate out of my hand?"

"Never mind such things as that, Leonard; you must learn, though you are so young, to have proper ideas of yourself, and hold your head up like a man. Very likely I may be a Lord one day. And then you will be the son of a Lord, and one of these days a Lord yourself. Shall you not like that?"

"I do not know," again replied the little fellow wistfully. And then after a pause, he ventured to look up in his father's face, and said, "Do you know, papa, Old Richard the Fisherman at Luccombe says I am the son of a King?"

"What, Leonard," asked his father, half carelessly, and half surprised, "what does Old Richard say?"

"He told me, papa, I was the son of a King, and heir to a King. But what is an heir, papa?"

"You are my heir, my child. And when I die you will have all I possess, all my houses, and property, and money, and carriages, and horses, to do as you like with."

"And what will you have then?" asked

Leonard. The question brought the colour into the father's cheek, and he put the child down from his lap. But Leonard, having once broken through his reserve, stood still by his side, and once more looked up in his father's care-worn, anxious face.

"Papa," he said, "Old Richard said that what I was heir to was up there, up in the sky, in heaven. Papa, shall you go to heaven? I should like to go to heaven, for Old Richard says it is such a beautiful place."

The father uttered an imperfect exclamation; and the child seemed alarmed. But as if there was something within him overcoming his natural reserve, he looked up once more, and said, "Old Richard, papa, told me if I wanted to go to heaven, I must go to church. Why don't you go to church, papa?" The question was too much for the patience of the worldly, irreligious man. And with an irritated imprecation on Old Richard's folly, in words which ought never to have reached the child's ear, he jumped up, and bidding the child follow him, hastened away from the spot.

CHAPTER II.

LUCCOMBE CHINE.

(Plate I.)

Perhaps the reader will not be surprised that the remembrance of the little scene at the summit of St. Catherine's followed and dwelt on my mind for some days. The face of the child—so beautiful, so innocent, so unconscious of the depth of the truths to which he was giving utterance, or of the deep impression which they might be making upon others—came to me more than once in my sleep. Once I dreamed that he had been talking with me, sitting on my lap, and asking questions about God and heaven—and then he vanished suddenly, I knew not how; and the dream hung about me even after I was awake and dressed, till on planning that morning an excursion for the day, I resolved on visiting Luccombe, to explore the landslip, and afterwards on making an inquiry after Old Richard

the fisherman. To see the coast to more advantage, I took a boat from the cove at Bonchurch, and rowing along under that exquisite scene of cliff and broken precipice, running up into green lawns and copsewood, and tossed into wreck and ruin only to be masqued over by nature with more of delicate beauty, we soon reached the Chine at Luccombe, and the dark, ferruginous, precipitous cliffs through which it is pierced; and whose sterness and severity of character contrasts so beautifully with the soft turf and woodland, and smooth expanse of down which tower above them, till they rise into the lofty headland of Dunnose. While I was enjoying the calmness and beauty of the picture, and Morris, the boatman, with his son, whom I employ always at Bonchurch, was pushing the boat in through the surf, I observed another boat at a distance with a gentleman and lady in it, apparently making in the same direction.

"Ay, Sir," said Morris, as he saw me looking at them; "that's the grand gentleman and his lady, who have just got such a mint of money."

"What gentleman?" I asked.

"Mr. Lisle, Sir; he that is staying at the biggest house in Bonchurch, down near the sea."

"Mr. Lisle?" I asked, recollecting the name which I had heard on the top of St. Catherine's.

"Yes, Sir, he's coming after his little boy, the young gentleman who's to have all his money, and they say he will be a Lord by-and-by, and they are going to buy all the land about here, and the farm at Yaverland. They say his great-grandfather had it before him, and used to live at Carisbrooke Castle, and was the King's governor here, and I do not know what."

"And where is the child?" I asked.

"O, Sir, he's in the cottage there, the white cottage with three windows and the little chimney, where the nurse and Job Johnson are talking. That's Old Richard's cottage."

"What, Old Richard the fisherman?" I asked.

"Yes, Sir."

"And what is the child doing there?"

"O, Sir, he's very fond of Old Richard—has taken to him quite kindly somehow. And his nurse—she's Old Richard's niece—sometimes brings him here. And this morning the lady and gentleman brought them round in their boat. They were going to Spithead, I believe to inquire about a great ship that was coming in with a power of money and fine things on board. And the little boy did not seem to care about going, and rather liked staying here with Old Richard. And so they put him ashore, with his nurse there, and I suppose now they are come back to take him home."

I told him to land me as quickly as he could, and after wishing good morning to the nurse, a plain, homely, but respectable looking woman, and to Job Johnson, who I found was Old Richard's nephew, I entered the cottage. It was small, with a low whitewashed ceiling, scantily furnished, but singularly neat. And a ray of light striking through the lattice fell on Old Richard's venerable face, as he sat in his high-backed wicker chair, his Bible on a little table at his side, and his spectacles placed to keep the page open, where he was reading the first

chapter of the Epistle to the Hebrews. I was wonderfully struck with the calm intelligence of his smooth broad forehead, thinly sprinkled with white hairs—his blue eye, clear, and vigorous, and cheerful—and the whole expression of his face, which, without exhibiting any refinement beyond his rank in life, bore on it the marks of that sobering, purifying, and elevating influence, which deep earnest piety exerts on the very poorest. Poor he evidently was, and the coarseness of his dress was made more striking by the soft delicate attire of my little friend Leonard, who, in the bright cap and pelisse and cape in which I had seen him on the top of St. Catherine's, was now standing at Old Richard's knee, looking up in his face with the same wistfulness, but with more of interest and pleasure, than he had showed in his conversation with his father. I made some excuse for entering the cottage, and taking care not to interrupt the child as he was talking, had soon the satisfaction of finding that my presence was scarcely noticed.

"And papa says I shall be a Lord," were the

first words he uttered after my entrance. "What is a Lord?"

Old Richard stroked his hair affectionately. "A Lord, my little gentleman, is a great person who has plenty of money and servants; and the Queen asks his advice, and he is allowed to wear a crown upon his head, and every body is full of respect to him."

"But I am only a little child," said Leonard. "Shall you ever be a Lord, Richard?"

The old man smiled and shook his head.

"But should you like to be a Lord?" repeated Leonard.

"I do not think I should, Master Leonard," said Richard. "And besides——," and here he looked gravely and earnestly into the child's eye, as if to read his soul within,—"I am something greater than a Lord even now."

"You greater than a Lord?" asked the little fellow wonderingly. "Nurse said you were so poor, and she was so sorry for it. And she told me I might bring you what papa gave me, because the great ship was come home. She said you had nothing to eat; and I am so sorry;

poor Richard!" And the child put out his arms to give the old man a kiss. Richard's eye moistened as he took the beautiful little boy up in his arms, and after kissing his forehead, and giving him a blessing, seated him on his knees. "Master Leonard," he said, "if you will be kind and good to the poor, and say your prayers, and do what your papa and mamma tell you, one of these days you too will be more, much more than a Lord. You will be a Prince."

"A Prince?" asked Leonard. "But a Prince is the son of a King, is he not?"

"Yes," said Richard.

"And are you a Prince?" asked Leonard.

The old man seemed awed with the question, and bowing his head reverently upon the child's neck, till his own gray hairs mingled with the boy's silky glossy curls, he answered in a low voice, "Yes."

Leonard drew back partly as perplexed, and partly as if afraid, but the question rose again,

"But a Prince is the son of a King, is he not? You are not the son of a King."

Once more the old man fixed on him that

calm, deep, searching eye, and whispered, "I am."

The colour came into the child's cheek, but from what emotion, whether wonder, or doubt, or surprise, or pleasure, or a feeling mixed of all, I could not decide. He sat silently for a minute, casting up only a side glance at the old man's tranquil face. At last he looked up more boldly, and said, "Why are you so poor, Richard?" If I was a King I would give you so much money, and you should have such a nice house to live in, instead of this old cottage. Is it not very cold in winter? Nurse says the rain very often comes through the roof. Shall you ever go away?"

Richard's face assumed a grave but not a melancholy expression.

"Whenever," he said, "the good King who is my Father sends for me, then I shall go away."

"And where shall you live then?" asked the child. "Papa said that perhaps I should live at Carisbrooke Castle, with lords and ladies, and have horses and carriages, and beautiful clothes,

and so many servants to wait on me. When I live there, Richard, will you come too? Do you know I should like to have some beautiful music there every day? I like music, do not you, Richard? Does it ever make you cry?"

"I do not know, my dear," said the old man; "but sometimes when I have been at church, when they were singing, it has made me think of the beautiful music which is heard where I long to go by-and-by: and then——" But the old man paused.

"And where is it?" asked the child. Is it far off?"

"Yes, very far off."

"And does the King ever come to see you?" asked the child.

The old man's breath seemed almost choked with awe as he whispered, "Yes."

"And are you his heir?" asked Leonard gently, as if he partook of the awe expressed in the old man's face. "Papa says I am his heir, and am to have all he has got, all the money on board the great ship. What shall you have?"

Poor Richard's brow contracted as with pain. His eyes closed for a minute. And then he answered,

"Perhaps nothing, perhaps every thing."

Leonard saw that he was suffering, and put his hand up to Richard's face, and stroked it as if to soothe him.

"Poor Richard," he said; "are you ill?"

But Richard recovered himself calmly, and answered gravely,

"My dear little master, when you become a man, if it should please God to spare your life, you will know how many things you have done wrong, how little you deserve kindness and fondness from any one, or to have any thing—much less all the beautiful things which are inherited by the sons of a great King."

"But you are very good, Richard," said the child. "Nurse says you are so good, and never did any harm in your life."

The old man shook his head with a bitter smile.

"Once I was as young as you, Master Leonard. And if then the good King had sent

to take me away, perhaps I should have been sure to have all the beautiful things which are given to his heirs and children. But since —" and he groaned deeply, and remained silent. "O Master Leonard," he said at last, "mind what I tell you now: never do any thing that is wrong, and then you will not have to do what I have been doing all my life, endeavouring to recover a lost inheritance."

The little fellow seemed scarcely to understand him, and there was a pause, during which I could not help searching the features of the old man, for marks of some hidden guilt or unruly passion, something which might tell of long painful warfare within against sin and temptation, such as in the ordinary language of ordinary Christians would be described, as he had described his own career. But all was calm, innocent, and holy; and yet there had been a constant daily struggle to regain the sinlessness of baptism, and ensure the hopes of heaven. I felt ashamed.

At last the silence was broken by the child, who looked up timidly in Richard's face, and

said gently. "Richard, may I ask you a question?"

"Yes, my dear little child, certainly."

"Have you ever had an heir yourself?" asked Leonard.

The question seemed to thrill through the old man's frame, and almost convulsed him with a sudden shock. He covered his face with his hands, and sat almost shuddering, while the child looked on frightened at the effect his innocent question had produced. At last Richard seemed to have recovered himself. He looked up, and gently stroking the child's hair, he said in a broken voice :—

"Master Leonard, I once had a little boy like yourself. He used to sit in my lap, as you do in this cottage: he was to have been the comfort of my old age. I used to teach him the way to heaven, and I thought we should have met there. But——" And the tears trickled down his cheeks, and his voice gave way.

"And did he die?" asked the child, his interest and curiosity roused by what he saw.

"No, Master Leonard," said the old man, "not die, worse than that. If he had died, he would have been safe now, and we might have met in heaven. He did not die, but he went wrong, did wicked things, and they sent him away, sent him far away, across the sea, thousands of miles; and there he could never become better, but could only get worse and worse. He was to have come back, if he had been good. But I have not heard of him for this long time. And I shall never live with him again, either in this world or the next." The old man's tears rolled faster down his face, and even the child seemed ready to cry too; but just as he was going once more to put his arm round Richard's neck to soothe him, a figure passed before the window, and with a joyous cry, "Oh! here is mamma," he jumped down, and ran to the door.

"Oh! Mamma, poor Richard is crying!" were the words with which he greeted a tall, elegant-looking lady, who drew the latchet, and lifted him up in her arms. "Do you know, mamma," and he whispered in her ear,

—"do you know Old Richard, good Old Richard, had an heir once,—just like me, and he did not die, but was naughty and was sent away, all out there, all across the sea, and Richard thinks he won't go to heaven; are you not sorry, mamma?"

His mother kissed the child tenderly. "We must not make good Old Richard cry, my love. And do you know, I have something that I think will do him good. Go to papa there, who is in the boat, and tell him that I will come directly. But first, wish Richard good-bye." The child climbed up on the old man's knee, before he could rise from his chair to welcome the lady; and could not resist the temptation as he wished him good-bye, to say, "Dear Richard, I love you very much. You must not cry, for mamma says she knows something that will do you good."

What this was, I was at the time unable to discover, for I could see the lady wished to say something to the old man in private, and I took the opportunity of hastily wishing him good morning, and rejoining the boat.

"Ah, Sir!" said Morris to me, as he pushed off from the shore, "There is the great rich gentleman, sitting there quite angry, because the lady would go and see Old Richard. It is a sad thing, but I think riches harden the heart. And they say, Sir, he never goes to church, but spends all his Sundays making up accounts, and the like, and getting money, and all to buy back the estate. I hope little Master Leonard, that is to have it all, won't turn out like him, that's all I can say. They're all going to Yaverland to-morrow. The great boat is to take them round Sandown, and they are going to look at the old house. It is all to be built up again, they say, and furnished grandly."

But here the boatman was obliged to take to his oars, and while we rowed back, I did not encourage his loquacity, but sat gazing on the ruins of the landslip, changed by the hand of the same Nature which had wrecked it, into a landscape of inimitable beauty.

CHAPTER III.

YAVERLAND FARM.

(Plate V.)

It is singular how soon we become interested and almost fascinated by subjects and persons which are brought before us, by a peculiar coincidence, two or three times in succession. They become mixed up with our thoughts, and appropriated to ourselves by habit. And thus I was led to dwell on my two meetings with little Leonard and his parents, and Old Richard, till it seemed almost natural and a matter of course, that, as they were going to Yaverland the next day, I should make my excursion in the same direction. It was a part of the island which I had never seen; and in particular I wished to examine the interesting old Manor House, with its many gables, clustered chimneys, parapetted court, and old hall, in which, I had been told, there were some remains of curious oak carving; as

well as the Norman arches of the little church, which stands close by, in that relation to the mansions of old which modern mansions so carefully eschew, as its chapel.

As the day was warm and fine, I once more engaged Morris to row me round the Dunnose Point into Sandown Bay; and as we passed Luccombe Chine I could not resist the temptation of landing, and asking Old Richard how he was. But on going up to the door of his cottage, I was surprised to find no one within, except a little girl, the daughter of one of the neighbours. Richard's chair was empty, but the table was still standing by the side, and the Bible upon it. The little girl was busy in sweeping the room, filling a kettle with water, preparing a fire, and making ready some potatoes and bacon for dinner. She had produced also a neat white table-cloth, with which the table was covered; and through an open door I observed that a little room, which the day before had been occupied with fishing gear and lumber, and a small old cradle in the corner, had now been cleared out; and a pallet bed of

the humblest description, but laid with sheets fresh and clean, had been placed in one corner.

I asked the girl where Old Richard was, but she could not tell; only she believed he had heard some news from a lady yesterday who had been on board a ship; and he had been crying, and was up very early that morning, he and Job Johnson together, and they had taken the white horse and gone somewhere; and she believed some one was expected to come to the cottage.

I asked if Old Richard had seemed sorry, and the girl answered me that he seemed very glad that morning, and set off walking quite strong.

While she was speaking, my eyes fell on the Bible which lay open, and the pages of which were stained with tears;—Richard had been reading the parable of the Prodigal Son.

As no further information could be obtained from the child, except that she believed Old Richard was gone to Bembridge or Spithead, and the inmates of the other cottage were also absent, I embarked again in the boat.

Morris, as usual, was disposed to be communicative. He told me all that he heard from the boatmen, who the day before had conveyed Mr. and Mrs. Lisle to the ship at Spithead—how it had just arrived from the East, full of all kinds of fine things; how they were all to belong, one of these days, to young Master Leonard—and how kind and good the lady was. In particular that there had been a poor person on board who had worked his passage home, and was sick, and the lady happened to see him, and inquired about him, and made him tell her his story. And these various topics, coupled with many digressions as to the management of the boat and the prospects of the lobster fishery, occupied us till we reached the shore under Sandown Fort, when leaving Morris to row back to Bonchurch, I proceeded on foot to find my way to the Manor House at Yaverland.

As I walked up the hollow land under the lawn of the pretty parsonage, I saw two figures just at the gate, in one of which I easily recognised Old Richard, and the other

seemed to be Job Johnson, on the white horse, with which he was used to carry his fish to Ryde Market. At that moment both were stopping, and Job seemed pressing the old man, his uncle, to get up and ride instead of himself, but Richard would not. He strode on with a hale and vigorous step, which at his age was surprising. It was the step of a man filled with one deep absorbing thought, pressing on with thankfulness and hope to some newly-awakened happiness; his stout stick was firmly grasped, his head erect, his foot firm. Only at times he paused and looked up, as if to check and relieve a swelling at the heart; and then he stopped to caress a dog which bounded and frisked before him. The dog had belonged to his unhappy son.

The little party, however, soon turned the corner of the road; and when I came next in sight of them, it was in front of the old Manor House. A lady and gentleman, whom I immediately recognised as Mr. and Mrs. Lisle, were standing, apparently planning some projected alteration either in the building or the

road, I could not tell which. They seemed intently engaged. My little friend Leonard was on tiptoe at his mother's side, trying to attract her attention.

"What is the matter with that boy?" I heard the father say, as I drew near.

"Oh, mamma, there is a poor sailor down the road. May I give him something?"

"No, Leonard," said Mr. Lisle, angrily; "never give any thing to beggars. They are good-for-nothing rogues and impostors. Keep your money in your purse, or you will be a beggar yourself."

"But, mamma," whispered Leonard imploringly, "he is very ill; he says he cannot walk any further."

"Go away, Leonard," said Mr. Lisle; "go into the house. Your mamma and I are busy."

"But, mamma," again whispered Leonard, "may I not give him the new-half-crown you gave me?"

"Half-a-crown," cried Mr. Lisle; "I never heard such extravagance. Half-a-crown to a beggar! Run away, you little goose."

"But may I, mamma?"

"Yes, my love, if the poor man is very ill you may," whispered Mrs. Lisle gently to him, as her husband happened to turn away. "Your papa does not wish you, I am sure, to be unkind to the poor, when they are sick."

But Mr. Lisle overheard it.

"My dear, he said, "you will ruin that child. I have been toiling night and day to make a fortune for him, working like a galley-slave to put him in possession of the estates of his family. And if he does not learn to save money, he will lose it all again. What has he to do with beggars? How can I afford to let him have half-a-crown to give to every idle, worthless vagabond that he meets in the road? Look here: take away that tree; carry the terrace straight forward; bring out another wing of the house for the picture gallery; and then build the conservatory to the south, with the fountain in the middle. Atkinson, the architect, promises to do it for 5000*l*. I have ordered the gilding for the drawing-room ceiling already. And the plate glass will do for the recesses."

Mrs. Lisle, with a saddened yet gentle countenance, and as anxious to avoid every thing which might irritate her husband, gave up to him her whole attention as he planned room after room—luxury upon luxury. One thought ran through each project: it was all to be Leonard's.

"And he looks so well," said his father, exultingly. "Dr. Conyers says he has quite recovered his cough. He has as strong a constitution as mine; and that has borne an immensity of wear and tear. I could not go through it again;—morning and night; winter and summer; early and late. It is too much for any man. And then the state of the money market. That last speculation did the thing. But you cannot tell how nearly it was all lost: if Gordon's bankruptcy had happened one month sooner we should have been beggars. Now, thank goodness, the ship is safe." And Mr. Lisle's face lighted up with exultation, and he proceeded with his plans.

"Shall you not do something to the church?" asked Mrs. Lisle gently; "it might be made very beautiful."

"Pooh! pooh!" said Mr. Lisle, "it is quite good enough. What is the use of spending money on a church, where people only come on Sundays? I wish it were half a mile off; I can't bear having a churchyard close to me: however, I shall make a pew for ourselves of course. And I rather think," he said, "it will be a right sort of thing" (but here his voice grew husky) "to have the family vault restored. It is proper and usual: Lord Rawdon has just done up his mausoleum. However, we need not talk about that now. Thank goodness, we are all sound and well, and no fear of dying." Mrs. Lisle sighed, but said nothing: it was not the time.

In the meanwhile little Leonard, on quitting his mother's side, had caught sight of Old Richard, striding on even in advance of his nephew on the white horse. The child ran up to him delighted.

"Oh! Richard, where are you going?"

Richard stooped to take the boy up in his arms, and give him his kiss and blessing.

"Oh, Master Leonard," he began, and stopped; for his voice became choked with

emotion, and setting the child on the ground, he dashed away something that seemed blinding his sight. Then again he took the child up, and with that impatience of reserve which joy begets, he could not help pouring out thoughts uppermost in his head, even to his little friend.

"Oh, Master Leonard, do you remember yesterday how you made me cry? My son, my poor son! Your dear mother, good, kind lady! she brought me word. He is come back; he is very ill. But he is come back, coming home; and he may still be saved. God be thanked! God be thanked!" And he kissed the child fervently again and again, as if the thought of his recovered son made his heart yearn still more fondly to those he loved before. "Jack," he cried to the dog, "Jack, poor Jack;" and the dog came frisking about him, as if filled with a presentiment of joy. "It was his own dog, Master Leonard, his own dog." And once more, overcome with his feelings, he put the child down. "I am going to see him, going to Bembridge, to Spithead, to bring him home to-day. God is

merciful, most merciful!" And he repeated the words again and again, long and reverently, but with intense fervour, and looking earnestly up to heaven.

The little fellow seemed unable to enter into or understand his feelings. He looked on, as the day before, wistfully and wondering —but with evident interest and fondness.

And then he said, "Richard, mamma told me I might give my new half-crown to the poor sailor."

Richard scarcely heeded him. The child repeated his words.

"Richard, will you come and help me give my new half-crown to the poor sick man?"

"Yes, my dear," said Richard, rousing himself as from absorption of feeling.

"You must come with me," said Leonard; "he is out there, sitting on the bank, he is so ill."

Richard took up his stick, and with the child holding his hand and leading, followed him down the road.

"Do you know, Richard, he says he has been at sea and a great way off, I do not know how many thousand miles."

"What?" exclaimed Richard, and the colour forsook his cheek.

"He told me he was come from Spithead," said Leonard; "and do you know he is going to walk all the way to Luccombe."

Richard started, and gasped for breath. "Where is he? where is he?" he asked. But by this time they had turned the corner.

I did not see what took place at the first meeting. But I could imagine it,—imagine the burst of feeling when the father fell on the neck of his prodigal returning son and kissed him. I was at the north side of the church, examining an old inscription on a tombstone, which told of one who "is the Resurrection and the life." But when I came round to the other side of the churchyard I saw two groups: one was composed of Mr. and Mrs. Lisle, who were walking towards the house, busied apparently in planning further improvements, and wholly unconscious of what was taking place behind them. In the other was, first, a pale, emaciated, haggard figure in the dress of a sailor, sitting in a state of exhaustion on the bank: holding his hand was little

Leonard. On the other side was Old Richard, his hat off, resting on his stick, his head turned to the church and bowed as in an attitude of prayer, a prayer of thanksgiving. In front was Job Johnson on the white horse. He had just come up. Nothing had been said to him as yet. Old Richard was too much absorbed to speak. The poor sailor, with one hand resting on his knee, seemed half disposed to rise, half doubting whether he should be met by his cousin as he had been met by his father, half overcome with shame and sorrow as well as suffering. Job himself was stooping forward on his horse, as if surprised by a recognition of an old known face, and prepared to jump off and throw himself into the arms of a friend. Jack, the dog, the dog of the lost and recovered prodigal, had caught sight, doubtfully, hesitatingly, of a face and a form he knew; and was looking to see if the poor, sick, miserable sailor was not his own lost master, now restored, after deadly sin and dreadful suffering, to the father he had deserted and the inheritance he had lost.

CHAPTER IV.

CARISBROOKE CASTLE.

(Plate II.)

It was a bright and glorious day: the sky unclouded, the air filled with perfumes of flowers, and songs of birds; the waters that lie in the bosom of Carisbrooke valley, crisped gently with a feathery breeze, and sparkling in the sunshine; the bees humming busily over the thymy turf; the bells of Carisbrooke tower chiming gaily and cheerily; and the distant sounds of bustling joyous life rising faintly but cheerfully from the village and the town. On the old, battlemented, ruined keep of Carisbrooke Castle floated heavily in the blue sky a huge crimson banner emblazoned with gold. From its smooth terraced bowling-green lined with snowy tents, each surmonnted with its flag, and surrounded with a lively glittering throng of visitors, there swelled on the breeze and died away again the sounds of music.

At times a peal of bugles broke upon the ear from the thickets which mantle the walls. And the roll of carriages and prancing of horses announced the rapid and successive arrival of guests to a brilliant festival. I was standing as one of the invited party, on the angle of the north terrace looking down on the road, as equipage after equipage filled with smiling faces and sparkling attire swept by; when the bugles in a louder strain than before sounded from the summit of the great gateway, and at the same instant a flash and volume of smoke from the south-west postern was followed by a discharge of cannon to greet a new arrival. Before I could inquire the object, a magnificent carriage drawn by four gray horses, with outriders in gorgeous liveries, flashed past, and through the great gates of the castle drove into the courtyard. The carriage was open, and I had just time, as it passed me, to recognise in the three persons seated in it the founders of the feast, Mr. and Mrs. Lisle, and sitting between them, or rather held up by his father on the seat to attract and acknow-

ledge observation, my little friend Leonard. He was plumed and apparelled like a little prince. And not only to his father and mother but to every eye present he seemed the centre of attraction, the one great object of interest and admiration. To smooth his hair, arrange his dress, gaze on him with an eye full of deep affection, and at times moistened and dimmed, was the task of his mother: to bid him bow his head to each greeting, kiss his hand to some fair lady who waved hers to him; turn from side to side to acknowledge the cheer which was raised faintly from some of the poorer and humbler bystanders, and at the same time to watch narrowly and proudly every expression of admiration and surprise in surrounding faces, was the occupation of the father.

It was little Leonard's own fête, his birthday; and the worldly ambitious Lisle, now at length at the height of his long-coveted aspirations,—the lord of thousands, recoverer of the estates of his ancestors, restored to his hereditary position in society, and enabled to realize

and command all the dreams of his youth,—had called round him on this day, not his friends, but all in whom he could hope for either sympathy or envy,—all who could add to his dignity by their own rank, or from whom he could extort an obsequious flattery,—to rejoice with him, in having found what he had lost. He had chosen Carisbrooke Castle as the spot, for this had been the chief seat of his ancestors' glory; and those days might recur again. The father's eye was lighted up with triumph, his lip compressed in arrogance, but relaxing with each salute into a carefully measured courtesy. His looks turned constantly to his boy, but with a glance very different from his mother's; no softness, no tenderness,—little of affection, much of pride. My little innocent Leonard was nothing. The son of the wealthy Lisle, the hope of a lineage of nobles, the future noble himself, was the all in all. And Leonard himself—I could scarcely get sight of his face, shaded as it was by his embroidered cap. But it seemed so little altered, grave, quiet, wistful, rather wondering, somewhat weary, little

moved at the brilliancy of the spectacle, wholly unconscious of his own importance, obeying every word of his father, but looking from time to time to his mother, as if he would fain ask permission to sit down, and rest upon her lap, and talk quietly in her ear. Only at one turn of the road, as the carriage advanced more slowly up the steep ascent to the castle gates, he sprung round as he caught sight of an old familiar face steadfastly and fondly, but sadly gazing on him, from behind a group of common people.

"Oh! mamma!" he cried, "there is Old Richard. I should so like to go to him."

"Old Richard!" exclaimed his father angrily; "what is that old man doing here? Look, Leonard, there is Lord Rawdon and your cousin Emily out there, your little wife, you know."

"I do not want to see Emily," said Leonard. "I would much rather go to Old Richard."

Some angry answer was on the point of breaking from his father, for the unwillingness to see little Emily jarred on one of the strongest

and most cherished hopes of Lisle's day-dreams. But his wife soothingly bade the child kiss his hand to Old Richard, and Richard, deeply moved, took off his hat, and bowed with a touching mixture of fondness and of respect. A burst of applause broke from the little group of peasants, behind whom he was stationed, and the popularity of the act redeemed in Lisle's mind its unbecoming condescension.

"I told Old Richard," said Mrs. Lisle, as she saw her husband's face relaxing, and his hat lifted from his head to acknowledge the cheer, "I told him he might come to-day. He is so proud of our boy."

Lisle muttered something impatiently; but the carriage had reached the great gates of the castle, drove under the ruined archway and towers, and was welcomed in the inner quadrangle by a burst of music, and the greeting of a throng of gay and fashionable guests, who all crowded round to congratulate the parent, and to force some attention from the silent unresisting child.

"How beautiful! How like his mother! His

father's lips! The Lisle forehead! What a treasure! What a lovely child! What prospects! How I envy him!" was uttered from many lips. But the child looked, as if he heard not; shrunk back from the forced caresses of one, held out his hand coldly and unregardingly to others, only clung closer to his mother, and his mother heard him whisper to her, "Mamma, I do not like all this crowd. May I go to Old Richard?"

"What a delightful little darling! Come to me, and let me give you a *bonbon*," said an old lady, the bright bloom of whose haggard cheeks, and the gay youthfulness of her attire, ill matched with the ravages of age on every feature. "Come and tell me who Old Richard is. I dare say he is some romantic, picturesque, delightful person."

And she stretched out her withered arms, covered with gaudy jewelry, to entice Leonard to them. But Leonard turned away with a look, which even in a child spoke like a sermon.

"Mamma," he said, whispering, and begging

to be taken up in her lap, "Mamma, I do not like these people;" and the tears came into his eyes, as he put his arms round her neck. "I like Old Richard a great deal better."

"But, my love," said his mother, "I am sure you will do as you ought; and you ought to like these ladies and gentlemen, for they are your own papa's friends, come here to wish you joy on your birthday."

"But I think Old Richard loves me a great deal better," said the child. "And he talks to me as I like to hear; and besides, mamma," (and here his voice was lowered so as only to be heard by those close around them,) "Old Richard hopes that he will go to heaven, and I am to take hold of his hand, and go with him. I do not think any of these people will go to heaven. Do you, mamma?"

"Hush, my child, hush!" exclaimed the mother, startled even with her religious spirit,—startled as most of us are startled with the thought of immortality introduced into an earthly festivity—and still more at the ominous truthfulness of the child's fancy, in the midst

of a gay, thoughtless throng of fashionable dissipation.

"Hush! my dear child; we must not speak of such things at all times."

But the child clung to her neck more closely, and the tears flowed more freely.

"Mamma," he whispered, "I want to speak to you alone, where these people won't hear."

And his mother gently disengaging herself from the crowd, took him aside, and sitting down on a bench, placed him in her lap.

"What is it you want to say, my love? What do you wish to tell me?" The child sobbed, and kissed hêr again and again.

"Dear mamma," he said.

"What is the matter, my love? Tell me, and do not be afraid."

"Nothing, mamma, only I dreamed last night ——"

"What did you dream, my dear?"

"I dreamed, mamma," and his voice faltered, and he paused; but at last he took courage, "I dreamed, mamma, that I was to be sent for to-day to go to heaven. Old Richard told me

that beautiful angels came for us, when we were to go, and one came for me last night. And it was very nice, only I did not like to go away from you, mamma. Will you go too?"

A cold shudder, a cheek forsaken in a moment by all its colour, and a convulsive pressure of the child to her bosom, told of a pang which shot through the mother's heart. It was not the thought of religion, the name of heaven which awoke it. The ideas were familiar to her. But to part with her child,—and then the omen! Words are not dead and lifeless things: they do not drop at random; they have their messages to bear even from unthinking lips,—their prophecies delivered by prophets foretelling, but not foreseeing. Once more the mother shuddered. But Mr. Lisle at that moment appeared, seeking for her, and hastily brushing away the tears, which had left their traces on the child's cheek, she took him tenderly in her hand, and proceeded to rejoin her husband, as the centre of the brilliant festival.

And brilliant it was: glittering dresses, laughing eyes, soft strains and peals of music,

gay greetings, and joyous voices, all mingling in rich and picturesque confusion, beneath a bright and sunny sky; and the more striking from the contrast with the gray ivy-mantled ruins which frowned around us And yet over all there hung, I know not what, but a sense of something hollow, something impending. I watched many a face, the foremost and the gayest in each group; and the pause, the sudden check, the breath caught, and changed into a sigh in the middle of the laugh, the strained compliment, the suppressed weariness, the forced exhilaration, all betrayed the presence of a gloom within. Even without, to my own eye, a mist seemed to be gathering over the clear heavens, and clouds forming in the horizon. I looked to the lady of the feast, and observed her eye glanced every moment to her child, with an anxious look, as if she felt no confidence in his security. The omen had taken possession of her mind. Lisle alone seemed carried away by the unchecked exuberance of joy. He passed from group to group, courting and receiving congratulations,

giving vent to plans and projects, dispensing his courtesies with proud condescension, or picturing to himself a coming day, when the noble walls of Carisbrooke might own him as their lord. And then he sent for Leonard, who came silent and unresisting, yet unpleased, to be exhibited, and admired, and flattered. There was an oppression of emptiness about the whole scene, which became painful; and I turned away from the crowded bowling-green, where the targets were now fixed for the archery, and passed along the southern terrace, intending to stroll quietly among the trenches on that side of the castle. At the corner of the terrace stood a little knot of attendants, and behind them I saw Old Richard. I perceived now that he was dressed in decent mourning, and his face bore evident marks of recent sorrow, and something of present anxiety. I stopped for a minute to accost him, and soon learned that the son whom he had so recently recovered had reached home only to die a few days after. The old man spoke of him calmly and gratefully, even cheerfully.

"God is merciful," he said, "very merciful. He weaned him from his sins; punished him to save him; chastised him with sickness, and poverty, and shame, and suffering; but chastised him as his son, and brought him back to his home—to die; that is, he corrected himself, to go to his real home, to recover his real lost inheritance. With some of us, Sir," he said, "this seems the only way, when they have gone wrong in youth."

At any other time I should have led him on to speak more, but the subject jarred painfully with the gay sounds that came from the lawn below; and I changed it to ask what had brought him so far from his cottage that day. He hesitated, and the expression of his countenance changed. But at last, as we walked slowly away from the little knot, he said,

"Sir, you came the other day to my poor cottage, and you saw that little child sitting on my knee. You know, Sir, it is his birthday, and there are many people here come to do him honour, some too who love him. Though I am but a poor man, I love him as dearly as any one.

I think, Sir, God, is not angry if the poor love the rich, and the old love the young. And that little boy has been many times a blessing and a comfort to me, coming to see me in my poor cabin, and talking to me when I seemed shut out under the cliffs from all the world, and as if all the world was dead to me, with no living thing growing up under my eye, and near my heart. His mother, Sir, knows it, and she is a good kind lady, and I thought I should like to see him to-day in the midst of all the fine people and fine things. And yet I do not know, Sir, but I would rather see him in my little cabin, asking me to tell him stories out of the Bible. I do not know, Sir, but sometimes my mind misgives me."

The old man stopped, and looked in my face to see whether I was sympathizing with him, —whether he might proceed.

"And why?" I asked; "what are you afraid of, Richard?"

"Sir," he said, "I have a sort of superstition: it has always been in our family for years,—that a great feast always comes before a great sorrow."

The words struck me. Something of the kind I had observed within my own experience, till I had learned to dread any great extraordinary festivity, in which the heart was let loose to exult in the multitude of riches, or the welcome of friends, or the brightness of prospects, lest with it there should come a forgetfulness of God, and the need of chastisement.

"And besides, Sir," continued the old man, observing that I was touched with his observation. "And besides, Sir, I do not know how it is, but there is something in that little child which makes my heart misgive me, when I think of his poor mother. He does not look quite like a common child. And sometimes he says things which make me feel as if they would come well from a clergyman preaching in the pulpit. It is not that he knows exactly what it means: but one does not expect such things from children."

"And yet," I said, "if what the Prayer Book says is true, and when children are baptized, there is given to them a portion of the same deep and mighty spirit of truth 'which spake by

the prophets,' it may speak also at times 'out of the mouths of babes and sucklings.'"

"So it may, Sir," said the old man. And then he continued after a pause, "And it may be, Sir, it speaks in many ways that we think nothing about. Should you think, Sir, that it ever speaks in dreams now, as it used to speak in old times, as the Bible tells us? I had a dream last night, and it seemed all so true and real. And I shall not like to go home till this is all over, and he is quite safe."

"Who safe?" I asked.

The old man brushed away a mist from his eyes.

"I do not know, Sir," he said; "it is very silly: and old men have their weaknesses. But I cannot say I feel happy about that little child. I dreamed last night his father was playing with him. And I was standing close by, and all at once, I could not tell how, he was changed into a beautiful angel with wings. And two other angels took him in their arms, and were going to carry him away up into the air: but he asked to come first to me and

kiss me, as he used to do. So they brought him to me, and he put his little arms round my neck, and whispered, 'Thank you, dear good Richard, for showing me the way to heaven.' But it was only a dream, Sir, only a dream. And I am very silly and foolish to think of it. Only, Sir, dreams sometimes make us think, whether we will or no. Good morning, Sir; many thanks for talking to me."

And as if anxious to escape from further conversation, he took his hat off from his flowing white locks, and walked slowly back to the spot where he had before been standing, and watching every movement of his little favourite.

The archery was over, the prizes delivered, the gay throng, instead of sauntering in groups, gathered round the low door which leads from the bowling-green into the quadrangle of the Castle, impatient, as even fashionable gentlemen and titled ladies can be, to secure comfortable seats at the banquet, which was spread in the two rooms forming the chief part of the habitable portion of Carisbrooke. Having no

one to escort or attend, and being more inclined to quit the scene of gaiety than continue in it, if it had not been for a fascination which seemed to hang over that little child, who was to be still the centre of the festival, I was enabled to obtain a retired seat at the bottom of the tables. And as soon as possible after the joyous, noisy, and almost tumultuous repast was over, I withdrew unperceived, in the hope of enjoying a quiet, silent stroll among the ruins in the calm brightness of a summer evening. The ladies were retiring at the same time, and as Mrs. Lisle passed her husband's seat, little Leonard, who was clinging to her hand, whispered to her,

"Dear mamma, please do not forget. I do not like it. It frightens me so. Please ask papa not to do it."

"I will, my love," said his mother, and she stopped to ask Lisle quietly, not to do this evening, what he sometimes did, to the child's great alarm, and some little danger. It was very probable the company would wish to drink the child's health. And the father, when

exhilarated and flushed with the occasion, would often place the child on his shoulders, and holding him by his feet would make him stand upright, and utter a litle speech of thanks. The exhibition was seldom made without tears from Leonard, who was neither strong nor fond of exhibition. And Mrs. Lisle had often remonstrated in vain against it, as cruel to the child and perilous. But the child had to-day shown so much uneasiness, and alluded to it so often, that she ventured once more to convey the petition to her husband.

"Pooh! pooh! nonsense! nonsense!" was the only answer she now received: and as the train of ladies passed on, she was obliged to leave the room, and to Leonard's great relief committed him to the care of his nurse, that he might be removed out of the way.

As I passed by the chapel door, I observed it open, and Nurse Martha standing under the archway of the entrance tower, busy in conversation with some of the domestics. The chapel itself had been visited during the day by several idle groups, who had sauntered into

it, and lounged about listlessly and irreverently. Lisle himself had taken into it one party of fashionable friends; and, unable to conceal the thoughts passing in his mind, he had indulged in imaginations of improvement, what might be done, what he would do, when—or as he checked himself—if he were the master of the Castle. A banqueting-room to be added here: a range of offices there. And the Chapel stood in the way. Nothing easier, he said, than to take it down. It was not wanted. It might have been useful in former days, when people were less enlightened. But the quadrangle would look so much better without it. His wife glanced on him sadly, and remarked, with her usual gentleness, that in former days a chaplain was an essential part of a nobleman's household; and that for any one resident in the Castle, it would be a great blessing to attend the daily service in a consecrated place of worship. Lisle turned away from her impatiently. He was afraid of being ridiculed by his gay companions; and assumed more indifference than he really felt.

"What should you say," he said, with a forced, affected levity, "to keeping it as a ruin? It might be made extremely picturesque. The roof is already in a bad state, and must be taken down; and the gable, if left standing, would group very well with those chimneys."

A yawn from several of the party indicated that they had little interest either in the destination of the sacred building, or in the dreams of their entertainer; and Lisle, sensitively alive to every expression of weariness or apathy on the day of his fête, hastened to quit the sanctuary.

When I stood by it, the door was slightly ajar, and all was silent within. I entered softly, and advancing up the aisle, was surprised to see a figure kneeling at the altar rails. It was Old Richard. He had moved away from the noise and bustle of the gay party, and while all others, both guests and domestics, were occupied with the banquet, he had entered the chapel. For some little time he stood leaning on his stick, with his head bowed

down, his white locks shading his forehead, his lips moving silently: at last, seeing no one was present, he approached the rails of the communion table, and screening himself from observation, he knelt down. At the moment I entered, he had been interrupted in his devotions by feeling some one at his side. A little foot had found its way into the chapel without being heard; a little hand was gently put into his own; and the old man, turning round, saw the child for whom he was praying, close by him, and looking up into his face.

"Are you saying your prayers, Richard?" asked the child.

The old man rose from his knees, took him up in his arms, kissed him, blessed him, and answered, "Yes."

"What were you praying for?" continued Leonard.

"I was praying," said the old man, "for a little boy whom I love very much, that he might be delivered from evil this day, and in God's good time taken to heaven."

"Was that me?" asked Leonard; "I should like to be taken to heaven."

"It was you, my dear Master Leonard," answered the old man. "I pray for you very often, much oftener than you think."

"Richard," asked the child, "do all these people here pray for me? They say they are so fond of me. But I do not think they love me as well as you do. If I go to heaven, do you think—" and here he stopped and checked himself, as if in awe.

"Do I think what, Master Leonard?"

"Do you think," repeated the child, hesitatingly, and timidly, "that Jesus Christ (as he named the name of names, he bowed his head) will love me as you do? I am such a little child, and when I play with the other children, they laugh at me, and play tricks with me. And just before the people went in to dinner, when we were up stairs together, Emily and the rest ran away from me, and left me in the dark passage to frighten me."

"But you must not be afraid in the dark, my dear," said the old man; "Jesus Christ is

every where, in the dark or in the light, to keep you and watch over you. And He loves you very, very dearly—far better than I can do."

"And will the angels love me too?" timidly asked the child. "I think they must be so beautiful and so good. I dreamed I saw one last night, and he spoke to me, and took me in his arms, and I was not at all afraid. Do you know," he said, after a pause and with a low voice—"Do you know, Richard, he told me I was to come with him to heaven, very soon indeed?"

"My child, my child," faintly exclaimed the old man, agitated beyond his powers of concealment,—"My poor child!" but the word so naturally but so wrongly used as an expression of pity, coupled with the thought of admission to heaven, restored him to his calmness. He corrected himself, and sitting down on a bench took the child in his lap, and pressed him to his heart. His eyes were swimming with tears.

"What are you crying for?" asked the child, as a big drop fell upon his beautiful forehead

curled over with its glossy chesnut hair. "Poor Richard, do not cry! Let me kiss you, and love you." The old man's tears flowed fast and freely, as the child twined his arms round his neck.

"Richard," said the child after a little silence, "I do not think any body cries in heaven. Do you know, I think about heaven very often, ever since you told me about all the beautiful things there, and whom I should see. But mamma says she hopes to go there with me. Do you think papa will be able to come? I should like to take him with me. Only, Richard, papa does not go to church, and he cannot go to heaven unless he goes to church. Can he, Richard?"

The old man shook his head sadly.

"And we must die first, must we not?" said the child.

The old man answered awfully, "Yes."

"I should not like to die," said the child, "and be put under the ground, in the dark, where it is all cold and wet. But heaven is not under ground, is it, Richard? It is up in

the skies—all up there; and such a beautiful place! How do people go there?"

"My child," said the old man, "when it pleases God, who is so good and kind, to let them come, he sends his holy angels, and just as when your nurse puts you to bed in your little cot, she takes off your frock and dress, and shuts it up in a drawer, and then lays you quietly on your pillow, with God and Jesus Christ and the blessed angels to watch over you till the morning comes—so it is to die."

The child looked perplexed, and yet pleased.

"And is there any pain?" he asked.

"Yes," said the old man; "sometimes very great pain; but then it is only sent because God loves you, and it is to make you better and more fit to live with the angels afterwards."

"I do not like pain," said the child. "Will it be very hard to bear?"

"Not harder than you will be able to bear, my child, if you pray God to comfort and relieve you, and make you patient."

"I tried to be patient the other day," said the child, "when I was obliged to have my

tooth out—it hurt me so much ; but then mamma had me in her arms, and kissed me, and asked me to bear it for her sake ; and I did not like to make her cry. I do not think I cried at all. But it will be worse than that, won't it, Richard ? Papa told me not to talk of dying. He did not like it at all."

The old man slightly shuddered.

"Do you know, Richard, he sometimes makes me so afraid, as if I was going to die." And the poor child turned round as if he heard footsteps coming, and his cheek became pale.

"He likes sometimes to make me stand upon his shoulders quite upright, and he holds me fast by the feet ; but it frightens me so, I am sure I shall fall some day. If I fell down, should I be killed, Richard ?"

"God forbid ! my child," said the old man.

At this moment the sound of a vociferous cheer from the banquet-room penetrated even into the chapel, and broke its stillness. I saw the child quail and cling closer to Richard's hand.

"Richard," he said, "the last time there were people, and they made a noise like that,

Papa sent for me. They drank my health. Do you think that he will send for me now?"

"I do not know," said the old man. "But if he does, what ought you to do?"

The child was silent with alarm, and the tears came into his eyes.

"My dear little boy," said the old man, "what does God require of little children, who are to come to heaven?"

"To do what they are told," said Leonard.

"And you will do what your papa tells you, will you not?"

The child could not refrain from sobbing.

"O, Richard, would you ask papa not to make me do it? It frightens me so."

Richard took the trembling child into his arms, and encouraged him. "Perhaps your papa will not send for you," he said.

But the child's doubting eye soon saw that this was not meant to inspire much hope.

"What ought we to do when we are afraid of any thing?" asked the old man.

"We must say our prayers," said the child. "May I say the beautiful prayer you taught me, Richard?"

"Yes, my dear, say it now."

"I should like to say it," said the child; "I think it would make me feel more happy; may I kneel down?" And kneeling down, he put his little hands together between the old man's hands, and repeated slowly and distinctly the Lord's Prayer. He had scarcely reached the end when voices were heard calling for Nurse Martha and Master Leonard.

"They are drinking Master Leonard's health," cried one of the domestics, out of breath, "and he is wanted. Master wants to have him brought directly. You must not stop a moment. Make haste; where is he, Martha?"

"In the chapel," said the nurse.

And the next minute the servant entered. The poor little fellow shook all over; his tears burst out afresh, and he clung imploringly to Richard's knee, till the old man himself found his own eyes dimmed.

"Must I go?" asked the child.

"Certainly, my dear little boy, go cheerfully —go at once. Dry your eyes, and do all that your papa wishes."

"And will God take care of me?" asked the child.

"Surely—as surely as I am here," answered the old man solemnly. "He will let nothing harm you if you trust to Him. Nothing happens to any of his children which is not for their good, even though it be pain or sickness, or even death itself."

"And if I do what I am bid, will He take me to heaven?" asked the child.

"Surely, most surely," replied the old man.

"Will you say, God bless you, Richard, as you did the other day, and kiss me?"

"God bless you—God for ever bless you, my child," said the poor man, as he sighed at the terror visible in the child's face. "May God have you in his holy keeping for ever!" And the child was taken from his arms.

I scarcely recall what took place in the next ten minutes. But before I had long left the chapel, and while I was standing by the outer gateway, I heard a shout of loud applause. It was followed by a dead pause. Then came all at once a piercing shriek, and all was silent.

The next minute there was a rush of steps—a murmur—hurried voices—a cry for a surgeon—for a horse. Something terrible had happened. I heard the name of the little boy repeated from mouth to mouth. Something about a fall—an injury. And before I could hurry back into the castle, through the open gates dashed a rider on a white horse. It was Lisle himself, ghastly as a sheet, horror-struck, as one who had slain his child. He had sprung on the first horse he could find, and was galloping madly down the steep declivity. Two persons (they were Old Richard and the nurse) on the wall to the south of the entrance tower were shouting to him to lose no time; to bring a surgeon instantly; not a moment was to be lost. He threw his arm back to them as if in reckless desperation—and in a moment he vanished.

CHAPTER V.

VENTNOR.

Instead of continuing the narrative, I may as well copy two letters written to a friend, which may be less wearisome both to myself and the reader:—

Bonchurch Hotel,
Tuesday, August 6th, 1846.

My dear W——,

I am still here, at this most delightful of all places, and most comfortable of all village hotels. I have quite recovered from my fatigue; and if you could only see the view I am now looking on, with the windows open down to the ground, and the broad expanse of ocean, glittering "like a silver shield," over the tops of firs, and ash, and thorn, and the rugged picturesque foreground of Clifden, you would not wonder at my being loth to leave it. It is not nearly so hot here as you would imagine, or as it is down below. Any one who comes to Bonchurch as an invalid, should try and settle themselves on this terrace. The tempera-

ture is much the same as in the best parts of Ventnor. In summer, the sea breeze is cooling, and in winter, the houses lie so close under the cliff, that every cold wind from the north sweeps over it. This I am convinced is one of the great secrets of climate. The people also are all so kind and disposed to sympathize with each other. It is almost a little hospital—nearly each family has some one sickening or dying. And yet such a hospital, so sweet, so soothing, so full of every outward thing that can disarm death of its terrors, by reminding us of heaven! And next year we hope to have our church. The foundations are laid already. And then, if we can have our daily service, and frequent communion, the comfort to the sick as well as the strong will be incalculable.

You write to ask how poor Lisle's dear little boy is. He is sinking rapidly. The injury is internal, and Dr. —— gives no hope. Sir —— —— has been here from London to see him. Yesterday Lisle returned from Edinburgh, where he had been himself, on purpose to fetch Dr. ——, but all agree that the case is

beyond the reach of medicine. Sir —— —— thinks the spine was injured by the fall, or by some wrench, as his poor father was trying to catch him in his arms. He lay insensible for some time afterwards. And his first words, when he recovered in his mother's arms, were, "Don't cry, mamma—I can bear it—I won't scream if I can help it." He has suffered a good deal, but is so patient, so gentle. The other day, when Dr. —— had been applying a bandage, which gave him severe pain, so that the perspiration quite stood on his forehead, after it was over, he asked his mother to beg Dr. —— to kiss him. I see him almost every day. He likes me to talk to him on the very things uppermost in my own mind, and to enlarge on them, as far as one can reach a child's comprehension. I sit by his cot, his mother holding one hand, and I the other, and his eyes, which are losing their lustre every day, turned from one to the other, sometimes to ask for help when the acute pain comes at intervals, and sometimes trying to smile, when we say any thing that pleases him. He has been taken

out two or three times in the carriage, but can scarcely bear it. Poor Lisle, himself! You never saw such a spectacle, such a wreck, both of mind and body, as he exhibited for weeks after the accident. They could not prevail on him to take off his clothes for nights together. He continued wandering up and down the house, listening at the door of the nursery, then distracted with the child's moans, beating his head; at times rushing out of the house in despair, then kneeling by the child's bedside, asking him to forgive him. The first time I was allowed to see him (I had written to him, as an acquaintance, and a clergyman; above all, as one who loved his child, which had the most weight), he broke out in an agony the moment I entered the room—"I killed him! It was my doing. He asked me not to do it, he prayed me not. I would do it. My child, my poor child! Vanity, cursed vanity! My vanity has killed him!" I did not attempt to interrupt him, particularly when I found his anguish venting itself in a burst of passionate weeping. He thanked me for coming to see

him—thanked me quite kindly, as if he had no right to any kindness, any sympathy from any one. For a long time he would not see his wife. He said it would kill her. She must hate him. But I prevailed on him at last. She is an admirable woman. So gentle, yet so firm. She waited till the paroxysm of horror was over, and then they met. And such a meeting! It ended in her leading him to the child's bed-side, and both knelt down, as it lay dozing in a disturbed sleep. Since then he has become calmer. On Sunday, to my astonishment, he proposed to go to church. I dared not make any objection, and yet I dreaded the effect. It seemed too great an effort. But with all the false bias and worldly ambition, which Lisle indulged in his prosperity, there was always a spring of energy and nobleness of spirit in him, connected I have no doubt with his blood and birth, which would probably have been perverted or extinguished in a career of temporal prosperity, and is now beginning to awaken itself. He saw what was passing in my mind, and without looking up,

and while covering his face with his hands, he said, "It is better to do it at once, and do it publicly. They will loathe me, point at me. But I cannot be more fallen than I am, more humbled, more degraded. They shall see me where I ought to be—on my knees."

I walked with him to the church. He would not go in the carriage. The narrow building was crowded, as it usually is, so full, that there was no room: some poor people even in the porch. They made way for us, not without wonder and compassion, and the S———'s opened the door of their pew for him. But he did not take advantage of it. Lisle, the haughty, worldly, ambitious Lisle, knelt down humbly on the bare stones at the open seats under the gallery, by the side of his own servant. He did not rise from his knees for some minutes. And when he did, the tears were streaming down his face.

I shall never forget the deep silence of compassion and awe which thrilled that little congregation before the service commenced. As we came out from under the lowly porch, and

the eye passed over the green sloping lawn, and rested on the glorious sea, dashing and sparkling with its breakers, no face was raised to indulge an idle curiosity. Many reverently took off their hats to him—many, who, under other circumstances, would not have ventured to intrude on his notice, or thought of expressing respect. But he was a broken-hearted man. A broken heart was written upon every feature; and all remembrance of the past was lost in pity. He was evidently touched by it most deeply. It did much not only to soothe, but to support and encourage him. Since Sunday I have not been with him, but yesterday I partly witnessed, and partly heard of a little scene which interested me much. I was walking into Ventnor with my letters, and just at the top of the hill, by St. Boniface, I overtook two ladies and a little girl. The child was about the same age with my poor little sufferer; and I recognized one of the ladies as Lady Rawdon. They were here some weeks before the accident, staying at Westfield House to be near the Lisles. She is a fine woman,

fashionable and dissipated; and I suspect, not the most careful of mothers. The child, Emily Rawdon, was evidently very troublesome: as spoiled children usually are: at one moment she was fretting, at another playing tricks; and silly expostulations, foolish entreaties, and angry threats (for threats were used, though not in the proper form to enforce attention), were all in vain. I could not help thinking that if such an education bore its natural fruits, and poor Lisle's plans had been realized, a store of suffering would have been prepared for Leonard as a man, infinitely worse than any which he was now enduring as a child. They walked on in advance of me till they reached the top of the shoot, at the point where the road breaks off to the north, up the hill; and here, coming up the ascent, I saw Lisle's carriage. It was coming slowly, the coachman endeavouring to rein in the spirited horses. The blazons on the pannels,—the gilding on the harness,—the splendid liveries,—the display of pomp and wealth,—all reminded me of Carisbrooke and the fête; but

what a change within! The day was so soft and balmy that I was glad to see they had been able to bring the poor child out.

As soon as little Emily caught sight of the carriage, I observed a change in her countenance. She seemed awed, and taking hold of her mother's hand, and pointing to the equipage, she asked if Leonard was in it?

"I think very likely he is," said Lady Rawdon; "they take him out as often as they can when it is fine."

"Mamma," asked the child in a low voice, "is he going to die?"

"Hush, my dear," said her mother, "you should not talk of such things. I do not like to hear of them."

"But is he very ill, mamma?" persisted the child.

"I am afraid he is," said Lady Rawdon.

"Mamma, where do people go to when they die?" asked the child.

The mother's countenance changed, and was discomposed, and she began adjusting some portion of the child's dress in order to evade the question.

But the child had never been taught to check a wish, or suppress a feeling. And she persevered. "Mamma, I want to know where people go to when they die? If I were to die, mamma, where should I go to?"

"Why do you want to know, my dear?" asked her mother, evidently disconcerted.

"Because that day, at the castle, Leonard told me that if I was naughty I should go to a bad place by-and-bye, and be burnt. Was Leonard right, mamma?"

"My dear, what could make Leonard talk to you in such a way?"

"I do not know, mamma, but we all wanted to go back and look at the well; and Arthur Monro told us it would be very funny to see the donkey—only Mrs. Lisle had ordered that we should not go for fear of tumbling in. And the door was open. And just as I was going to peep in, Leonard came and took me by the hand, and told me it was very wrong, and that if we did what we were told not to do, God would be very angry, and we should be punished. What did he mean, mamma?"

"I wonder, my love, where he could have got such notions?" said her mother.

"He said something about Old Richard at Luccombe, who told him," said the little girl, "and that Old Richard knew every thing about it—and that there was a dark place under ground where naughty children were sent to when they died—and a beautiful place up in the sky, where they were taken if they were good. You never told me any thing about it, mamma. Do you think it is true?"

"Hush! my love," said the conscience-stricken mother. And turning to her companion, who proved to be a humble obsequious attendant—she observed awkwardly, "I cannot think how it is that people in these days, put such strange ideas into children's heads. It makes one quite shudder."

"It is dreadful," drawled Miss Tarlton.

"I do not think my nerves can stand this place any longer," said Lady Rawdon. "It was all very well while the Lisles were in good spirits, and could make parties. But ever since that horrid accident they have become quite dull—in fact quite a bore."

I do not know what answer the obsequious companion would have made, but at this moment the carriage approached, and Lady Rawdon prepared her softest smile and most affectionate wave of the hand. But it was all in vain.

"I think that is Lady Rawdon coming down the hill," said Mrs. Lisle to her husband.

"Draw down the blind, my love," said Lisle. "They are not friends for an hour like this."

As he spoke, Leonard, who was lying supported by pillows in his mother's arms, gently turned round his head. "Mamma," he said, "if it would not tire papa, I should like so much to lie in his lap. May I, papa?"

The mother's look of joy, of thankfulness, as Lisle stretched forward fervently but most tenderly to lift him up, and take him into his lap, was most touching. The eyes of Lisle himself filled with tears. It was the first time he had had his child in his arms since that dreadful day. The poor little fellow lay

seemingly exhausted by the effort of moving; but though his eyes were almost closed, he put out his pale hand, thin and transparent, to feel for his father's hand, and having locked his own in it, he lay quite still. It was with great difficulty Lisle mastered his feelings. The choking in his throat became almost audible; but the dread of disturbing the child by the slightest movement enabled him to control himself. The carriage moved on slowly, and at the top of the hill, on the right hand side of the road, Old Richard was standing. He was standing with his hat off, as if he had been in a church, or was praying, or rather as if some object of reverence and awe was approaching. And what object so full of reverence and awe as a dying child? A little girl, one of the children of the fisherman who lived in the next cottage to his own, was taking hold of his hand and pointing to the carriage with childish admiration and wonder. It was the same child I had seen with him once or twice before, since the accident. He seemed to have adopted it, as if it was neces-

sary for him to have some living being to love, and, as far as he could, to bless and bring up in goodness; and as if his heart yearned most to those whom our Lord himself so loved—the lambs of Christ's fold.

Lisle saw Richard as the carriage approached him, and gently stooping over the little sufferer in his arms, he asked if Leonard would like to see the old man.

"Yes, dear papa," the child answered faintly. "Very much indeed, if you like it. But I can't sit up. Will you lift me?"

Mrs. Lisle pulled the check-string, and the carriage stopped.

"Ask that good old man to come here," said Lisle to the footman, who appeared at the carriage window. "Open the door and put down the steps."

And as Richard came close, the child was lifted up. His breath was so seriously affected by the exertion that he could scarcely speak.

"God bless you! May God Almighty bless you and keep you, my dear little master," said the old man, as he gazed through his tears on the little sufferer. "Thank you, Sir, thank you,

Ma'am, a thousand times for letting me see him!" And the old man turned away to hide the tears which coursed down his cheeks.

"Don't cry—you must not cry, dear old Richard," whispered the child faintly. "It makes papa cry—poor papa!" and he tried to lift up his head; but it sank back on the pillow. And he could only ask with his eyes that his father would stoop down to kiss him.

As Lisle hung over him, he said, "My darling child, should you like me to tell old Richard now about the cottage we are to build for him, and the nice garden he is to have, and the comfortable bed?"

"Not now, please papa; not now, unless you like it."

"Shall he come to-morrow afternoon, my child?"

"To-morrow morning, if you please, papa."

"I think the afternoon will be better," said Mrs. Lisle; you are generally stronger then than in the morning; and, perhaps, then he could tell you one of his pretty stories."

The child gently shook his head, with a sad but earnest look, as if he knew more than either

his father or his mother, that it could not be then. "In the morning, please, dear mamma; it must be in the morning."

"Why, my love?" said Mrs. Lisle.

But the child only repeated, "In the morning, if you please, dear mamma. Richard, will you come and see me in the morning?"

The old man bent down to kiss his little hand, which lay almost lifeless on the pillow. And the child looked up, and, as he used to do, stroked the white hair and furrowed cheek which was pressed close to it. But the exertion was too great. And Lisle, shaking old Richard kindly and warmly by the hand, asked him to come to the house to-morrow at twelve.

"Ten," faintly whispered the child. "Ten, please, papa; twelve, too late."

There seems to have been some mysterious pre——

Wednesday, August 9th.

I was obliged to break off my letter suddenly yesterday. It is all over. Harris, Lisle's butler, came up to me while I was writing, about eleven o'clock, wishing that I would go down to the house at once. The dear little fel-

low was evidently sinking. I went down without delay, but found that all was over; the mother wonderfully supported. Lisle himself in an agony of grief; but all taking a right direction; full of remorse, of humility, of resignation, and gratitude. Certainly there are in him the elements of a noble character, which this terrible blow is bringing out. I had some conversation with the nurse. She told me the little sufferer lay almost in a state of insensibility from the time of his return from his drive till about ten o'clock this morning. Then he seemed to wake up, and asked for old Richard, who was already in the house, and came to him. The nurse could not describe all that passed for crying. But she told me the child had made an effort to move and put his arm round the old man's neck, but his strength had failed. Then he motioned the old man to put his ear down close to his lips, and whispered, in a voice scarcely audible, "Thank you, dear Richard, for teaching me the way to heaven." After this, he lay for some little time motionless, with his eyes closed. When he opened them, he saw the old man still bending over him, and made a

little significant movement of his hands which were lying on the outside of the bed-clothes. The old man understood it, and taking them very gently, joined them together within his own. The nurse said that a faint smile played on the child's pale face, and his lips moved sensibly. She fancied he was repeating the Lord's Prayer. Just as he came to the close there was a slight convulsive movement, which alarmed her, and she sent for Lisle and the poor mother, who were in the next room. As they came and bent over the bed a sudden strength seemed to be given to the dying boy. He opened his eyes, recognised his father, smiled on him, uttered quite distinctly the words, " Happy—no pain—no pain. They are coming for me! Dear papa!" and then a sudden change came over him ; and before a word could be uttered he was asleep—asleep in the Lord. I have seen him since ; so peaceful, so beautiful! But I must not dwell on it. He has received his inheritance in heaven. May we strive to regain ours!

Ever, my dear W——,

Yours affectionately,

CHAPTER. VI.

YAVERLAND CHURCH.

Bonchurch Hotel, June 6, 1847.

My dear W——,

On looking back to my diary, I find it was just this day twelvemonth that I wrote you a long letter from this very place. You know how fond I am of it. It grows on me every time I return to it; and the Lisles being still here gives it an additional interest. You must have observed when you saw him in London, what a wonderful alteration had taken place in his whole tone of mind. I thought at one time he would have fled from a spot which, like this, reminds him daily, hourly, of past events. But they both seem to cling to it more fondly from the recollections of their child. She speaks of him constantly and freely, and he listens without shrinking, but with such grief and humiliation, and humble submission to chastisement in his countenance. It is most touching. His whole thoughts now seem em-

ployed in devising modes for the proper employment of his great wealth. He has taken a much smaller house, curtailed his establishment, reduced his mode of life to great simplicity, as becomes a penitent. There is the hereditary landed property, and the purchase of Yaverland has been suspended. And therefore he feels at liberty to reside here. I have heard a great deal about him from my friend, Old Richard. The first day he left the house after the funeral of his child, he went alone to Luccombe Chine. The old man told me he should never forget the expression of his face, as he knocked gently at the door and lifted up the latch and came in. He was in the deepest mourning, his face perfectly haggard, his hair whitened, but all so subdued, so softened. Richard rose from his chair, but Lisle would not allow him to stand. He sat down by his side, took the old man's hand in his own and wept freely and silently. It ended in his explaining to Richard his wish that he would come and occupy a cottage near them, and consent to receive an annuity, for Richard's

wants and habits more than adequate to supply him with every comfort. But the old man respectfully declined. "God," he said, "had not yet deprived him of his strength. He could do something to maintain himself. And there were others poorer than himself, who needed it more. The fisherman at the next door had a large family—he had none. If he fell ill, or was unable to work, then he would not hesitate to apply for help; he should not be ashamed to receive alms from any Christian, much less from Master Leonard's father."

Lisle pressed him in vain—told him it was the child's own gift, his own entreaty. And then the old man said there was one thing he should like, if it was not taking too great a liberty and asking too much favour. He should like to possess a lock of the little boy's hair. Lisle had anticipated his wish. He had brought one enclosed in a note which the child one day, after the accident, when he had felt better, had sat up in his mother's lap at his own request to write, with her hand to guide the letters. The effort seemed to please him.

His mother had asked him what he had wished to say. But it was only, "Dear Richard, I am better to-day. It is not much pain. I think God is very good and kind to me. If you please, will you come and see me, and tell me a pretty story? I am your affectionate friend. L. L." The old man took the letter, and placed it in his Bible.

"Sir," he said to Lisle, "may I say to you what an old man, though he is poor, may say to one who is younger, that such strokes as you have received are not given except to those whom God loves—given to bring them to Himself? I never knew, Sir, in all my experience, any one visited with sorrow, and bearing it patiently and well, who was not thankful for it afterwards. And, Sir, you were thinking of recovering an inheritance for your child — making him rich and a great man. And what you most wished for him, God, who loved him, has given him, only sooner and better and greater far than you ever dreamed of. And now it is his for ever. I had a son, Sir, once. He died very long since; and I buried

him at Bonchurch. And now, whenever I feel lonely here, sitting of an evening without any one to talk to, or work for by my own fireside, I think of the time when, if God wills, we shall meet again; and it does me good, Sir. I think, Sir, if you could bear to talk of your little boy, and to imagine where he is now, what he is doing, how he may be thinking of you or praying for you, (for we do not know what may not be done by blessed spirits in heaven,) it would make you wish to be with him, rather than that he should be with you. And then, Sir—but I am making too bold in talking to you in this way—only, Sir, I loved your little boy very dearly, and when that is the case it does not seem such a liberty to talk to those who loved him too."

And then the old man went on to speak of the visits the child had paid him, and the little things which had passed, and the traits of character he had observed in him. And all the while, he mingled with the account some little touch of thought which told on Lisle's state of mind, and left impressions deeper than any

sermon. There was no art or affectation; it was the simple, unpretended, unstudied effusion of the heart; but in a chastened and holy head filled with the Holy Spirit there is a wisdom, and a tact, and a sensibility deeper than any teaching, and more powerful than any eloquence. Lisle sat and listened in silence. He went away with altered thoughts —returned again in a few days—renewed his visits repeatedly, till the poor man became the instructor of the rich, and was teaching the father the way to heaven as he had taught the child. One thing you will be rejoiced to hear. Very soon after the funeral (he was buried of course at Yaverland) Lisle spoke to me about a monument. He knew I was acquainted with one or two of the best sculptors in Italy, and he wished to have a marble statue of him by Gibson. I ventured to dissuade him from it. His mind had never before been turned to the subject. But when I pointed out to him that such an expenditure would only serve to indulge his own pride, and commemorate individual feeling—when I asked him to imagine

what would be most gratifying to his little boy, if now he could be looking down on earth and hearing what was passing, a monument to his own glory, or a work for the glory of God, he at once saw the thing in its right light. He proposed, of his own accord, to devote a considerable sum to the restoration and improvement of the church, and to place only a plain marble slab over the spot where the little fellow's remains are deposited. I went with them both to Yaverland, for the purpose of looking at the building. He has been in negotiation with architects for some months.

It was very touching to see the father and mother standing together side by side in the church, looking down, calmly and even gratefully on the spot where their child lies. I could not bear to intrude on them. But they remained in the church some little time, and when they came out into the open air both had been weeping; but there was no expression of that dreariness of sorrow which leaves the heart cold, and desperate, and hardened. On the contrary, every

thing seemed full of soothing recollections and still more soothing hopes. They spoke freely on the subject of the alteration that might be made in the church, preserving the noble arches. I have long had myself a plan of still more extensive benefit, and which I think I shall suggest to him. His mind is now so open to acts of benevolence. And any thing which associates the memory of his child with plans of Christian charity, is so likely not only to interest him, but to deepen and strengthen the good impressions which his calamity has made upon his mind. He has given up all thought of purchasing Yaverland as a family seat, and expending on it the sums he had once contemplated. But I have sometimes thought that a home for orphans, an orphanotrophium, which formed one of the regular ecclesiastical institutions of the early Church, might well, and properly be created in our own Church, and I shall suggest the idea to him. No monument to his child's memory could be more appropriate. We have foundling hospitals, but they are in many respects objectionable. But a home for orphans

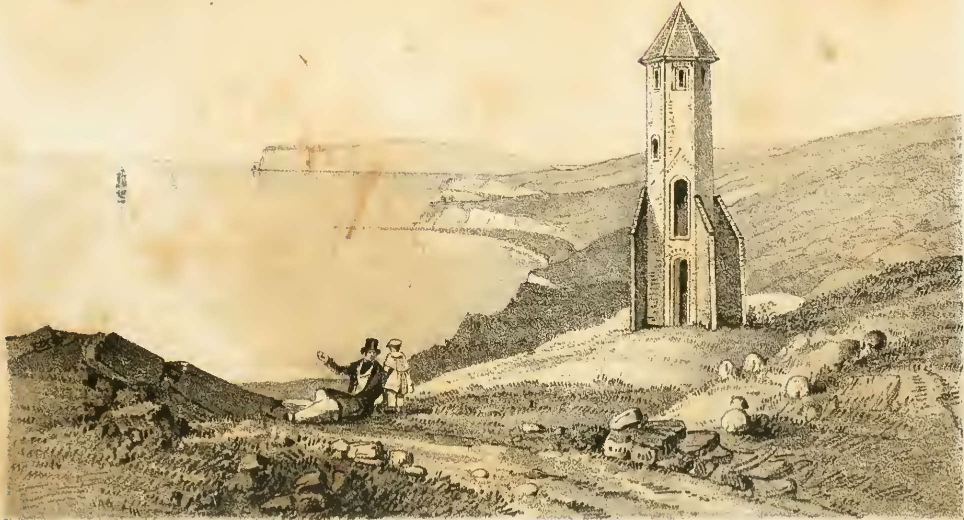
where they might be placed under the care and nurture of a little organized family of religious women, (you, who know my views, will not be afraid even if I call them a sisterhood,) would I think be full of interest. I would give them their chapel and their chaplain—teach them music for the church choir—receive payment from the rich in order to maintain the poor—form a proper body of rules to be approved by the bishop, and enforced by him; and provide a modern endowment for their permanent support. I have often looked on Yaverland as a place admirably suited for some such purpose. It is retired without being remote, the situation healthy and beautiful. The old house would require little more than repairing, And there are a number of out-buildings which, with a little management, might be made available for a variety of useful purposes. The proximity of the little church would be a great advantage, as it would at once serve for a chapel. One thing I am sure of, that in this direction to objects such as these—we must devote our energies at the present moment. Those who have formed

such theories in their thoughts, must set them before others to whom God has given the means of realizing them. And we little know how many minds among the wealthier classes Almighty God at this moment, in this hour of trial and resuscitation in the English Church, may be weaning by some dreadful blow from dreams of vanity and pride, that they may offer to Him that sacrifice of their worldly goods, without which such works cannot be accomplished. "Cast thy bread upon the waters." Suggest such thoughts even where there is no apparent prospect of their being realized, and leave them to his good providence to bear their fruit in due season. All around is working to one end, and under one law—in the struggles of earthly ambition,—in the dreams of poetry and fancy,—in the earnest steady efforts at improvement made by minds which have never fallen from their baptismal purity,—in the anguish and chastisement of the penitent,—in the early removal of innocent childhood from the temptations and corruptions of earth,—all alike is a struggle to recover an inheritance we have lost. Has not

the Church of our fathers lost its inheritance also, lost children from its arms, and sheep from its fold? Shall we not all and each of us struggle with one united effort, with our purses and with our prayers, to recover what, by the blessing of Heaven, may still be made her own?

BENEDICAT DEUS!

THE END.



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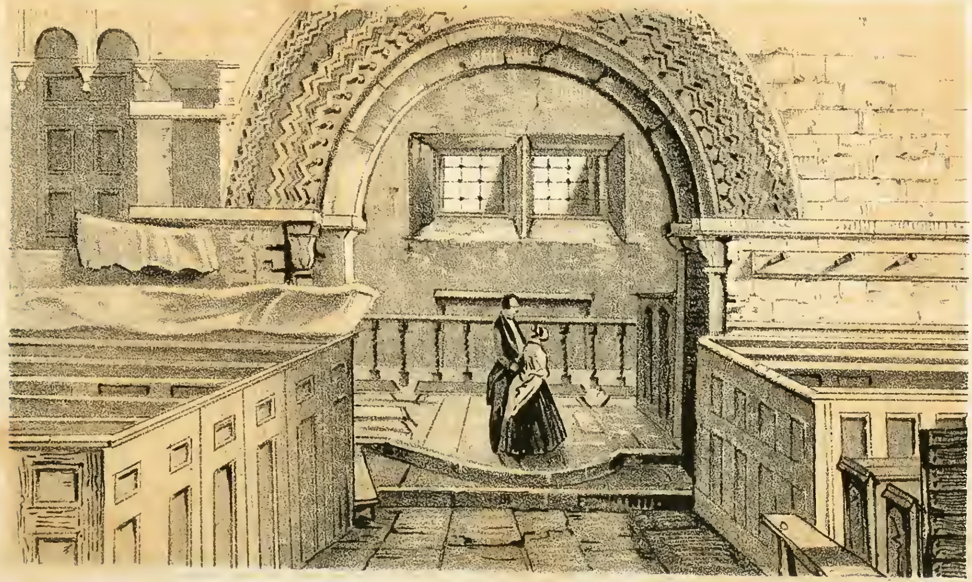

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