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FRIEND OLIVIA

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BY

AMELIA E. BARR

AUTHOR OF "JAN VEDDER'S WIFE," "A DAUGHTER OF FIFE," "THE BOW
OF ORANGE RIBBON," "THE BORDER SHEPHERDESS,"
"THE HOUSEHOLD OF MCNEIL," ETC.

"Breathe on us for the passing day
The charm of ancient story."

NEW YORK
DODD, MEAD, AND COMPANY
PUBLISHERS

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TO

The Society of Friends in America,

I INSCRIBE THIS VOLUME.

AMELIA E. BARR.

1890

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CROMWELL, our chief of men, who through a cloud
Not of war only, but detractions rude,
Guided by faith and matchless fortitude,
To peace and truth thy glorious way hast plough'd,
And on the neck of Fortune proud
Hast rear'd God's trophies, and his work pursued,
While Darwen stream with blood of Scots imbrued
And Dunbar field resound thy praises loud,
And Worcester's laureate wreath. Yet much remains
To conquer still; Peace hath her victories
No less renowned than War: new foes arise
Threatening to bind our souls with secular chains:
Help us to save free conscience from the paw
Of hireling wolves, whose gospel is their maw:—
Cromwell our chief of men!

JOHN MILTON.

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FRIEND OLIVIA.

I.

THE KELDERS OF KELDERBY.

“Though God as one that is an householder
Called these to labour in his vineyard first,
Before the husk of darkness was well burst;
. though the worst
Burthen of heat was theirs, and the dry thirst;
Though God has since found none such as these were
To do their work like them : because of this,
Stand ye not idle in the market-place.”

WHEN Oliver Cromwell held the sceptre of England, Odinel Kelder was baron of Kelderby and Swaffham. He was not ignorant of the ancestors who had mingled his clay and tempered the spirit within him. For seven hundred years he knew their names and their deeds. The farthest away of whom he had knowledge he spoke of as “my fore-elder Jahl,” and owned the peculiar blessings of his lot to be the result of Jahl’s nobility of nature and of his adventurous spirit.

For Jahl Kelder had been one of that earliest band of pilgrims who, to escape the tyranny of Harald Haarfager, sought liberty of mind and person among the eternal snows of Iceland. A few years later Jahl joined his friend Toddi, or Dodd, in that southward search for a fairer home which resulted in their settlement on the shores of Cumberland and in the dales of Westmore-

land. Toddi found the Whitehaven, and bought from the monks of St. Bees the great woods and lonely dales stretching back to Ennerdale. Jahl reached the solitary seaward stretches of Silverdale, the very region of mystic forgetfulness, with its rounded hills and wooded wastes, and its great expanse of ribbed and wrinkled sand-flats, — a dim, misty sea, where the flood glides up to the land swift and treacherous, or, beaten by conflicting winds, is white with phantom foam and vexed with spray and spindrift.

Behind him was a waste of sullen moss and craggy mounds, — unfruitful solitudes so bare and desolate that he called them *Hardanger*, the old Norse name for a place of hunger and poverty. But Jahl asked little of the land; he looked to the sea. It raced round its numerous promontories, and lay sleeping in its bays; and he saw the gray wings of his ships peopling the pallid waste. They were his hands; they would reach him the good things that were not within his grasp. He built his big stone hall on the height of Silver Scar; and the lonely land, and the misty waves bowling in and out of the fog, became dear to him.

Once his friend Toddi sailed southward to keep a feast with him, and he said, “Jahl thou art not wise to build so high; every wind of heaven will smite thee.”

But Jahl answered, “This is what I think, Toddi, — the birds that build on the ground make very poor nests.”

Jahl built for his generations. They sat in his place, and trod in his footsteps; and kept his memory green. They married into the great Saxon families of Swaffham and Millom, and twice the Norman De Burgs added the quicksilver of their race to the life stream of the Scandinavian stock; and as one or the other of the race dis-

tinctions predominated, so was the Kelder of his day. In the course of seven centuries the original stone hall had become a fine seat. Not that all the Kelders had been wise life-tenants of it, but that the potency of the Saxon element had been frequent enough to repair losses and accumulate capital. So that at the beginning of the seventeenth century the Kelders were one of the great families of the North Country.

Odinel, the nineteenth of his name, differed widely from his ancestor Jahl; but the differences were mainly in the inner man. Outwardly he had the great Norse frame, the lofty stature, and the blond complexion of his northern kin. His mother had been a De Burg, but he owed nothing to her, except the high-bred nose and the haughty upper lip of the Norman race. He had a large compact forehead, eyes like tempered steel, shining with a steady gleam, a square chin, a firm mouth, and a manner at once benignant and austere,—the manner of a true liegeman of Duty, kind, faithful, and intrepid. If he clasped hands it was with a flesh-and-blood warmth of grip; if he smiled, it was with the large, clear sincerity of a man without guile. He had the heartiness of the Norse nature, the breadth of the Norse imagination, and the refreshing atmosphere of one who lived in the open air, who went alone into the heart of the mists and into the silence of the starry sky, who knew the visionary majesties of the mountains, and the pale, pensive glooms of the valleys, and who loved the flavour of the brine and the damp fresh air of the northern ocean.

He was sixty years of age, and he had played the man in Israel on every battlefield for liberty from long Marston Moor to Worcester. Life had been a stirring story to him. He was sitting one evening very quietly on his hearthstone talking it over with the man within him.

This mighty *I* was truth itself. It told him plainly that at Marston he might have been more merciful; that at Dunbar, in that great strait between the sea and the Lammermuirs, he might have been more trustful; that in the red streets of Worcester he might have been more just. And he was humbled amid his valiant memories, silently appealing from the accuser to Him who had made the atonement.

The tall black chair in which he sat had been the baron's own for generations. One foot was on its footstool, the other pressed down the soft white wool of the hearthrug; his left hand lay upon the basket hilt of his long rapier, his right hand shaded his eyes, his fine head drooped slightly forward. But though silent and motionless, he was not alone. On the opposite side of the rug Lady Kelder was spinning flax. The little black wheel, richly carved and tipped with silver, was at her knee, and between it and the snowy flax her white hands made monotonously graceful movements. She wore a dress of black silk with a lawn kerchief pinned across her breast, and a black-silk hood lined with white fell slightly backward from her white hair. A handsome woman, of an unchanging countenance, compact and conscious, who knew what she meant and what she wanted and in what she believed.

But though she spoke not she glanced frequently toward her husband; and presently he caught her glance, and a loving smile flashed echo-like from face to face. Then she said, —

“Nathaniel stays away so much longer than was spoken of. What think you, dear heart?”

“I think, Joan, that he will have business to be his excuse. Between here and London are many hard miles.”

“And also he may come by Kendal. Our cousin De Burg has a very fair daughter. I have heard that Anastasia has bettered all expectations of her beauty; she may be reason enough to stay even a wise man.”

“Anastasia has Charles Stuart in all her thoughts. A Puritan gentleman is her mock, and nothing else. What agreement can there be between her and our son?”

“In troth and peace love has no politics. Any side will suit him.”

“Nathaniel’s politics are the complexion of his creed. Joan, think not evil of your son.”

“As for creeds, he may take to one you think not of. There is a beaten path now between Kelderby and Sandys, and Mistress Prid — ”

“Mistress Prideaux is a Quakeress. Dear Joan, keep a rein on your thoughts. Nathaniel will give you a betterly sort of daughter than that.”

“I have the fear in my heart day and night, — a fear unfaceable. There are things I would never submit to; that is one of them. A Quakeress in Kelderby! God forbid!”

“Calmly, Joan. ’Tis said they have spiritual gifts.”

“What is the Protector doing to suffer them? I would he were more faithful to the truth.”

“A Quaker may privately enjoy his conscience, in both opinion and practice; sure that is but reason. As for Nathaniel, I think he is such a man as will take his own way if it sorts with his faith and duty.”

He rose as he spoke, and began to walk slowly about the long low room, for the housekeeper, Jael, and a serving-man had entered; and the woman put aside Lady Kelder’s spinning, and the man began to lay the table for the evening meal. Jael was a noticeable woman fifty years old, fresh and sturdy, the right hand of her mistress

in all domestic concerns, the loyal friend of the Kelders, bound so willingly by the kindly traditions of many generations. She pushed the logs together and added fresh ones, and then straightening herself watched for a moment the arrangement of the fine pewter service upon the table. This being satisfactory, she turned so as to face her mistress and said, —

“My Lady, Susan of Lambrigg and Jock the second shepherd want to marry; it puts me about a bit.”

“It is a fit marriage, I think, Jael.”

“True, my Lady, but not a fit time, with the spring cleaning to do in Kelderby, and the sheep casting their lambs on every fellside. It is n't reasonable. But what signifies talking? You can't think what a couple of fools they be. They stand to wedding through thick and thin.”

“Then wedding it will have to be. Dear me, Jael, how girls will run into trouble! Is it raining?”

“Dreeping wet, and very airy; the wind being nor'ard and west'ard. You can hear the billow-bluster at the foot of the Scar.”

“Your young master is somewhere on the road between here and London. I pray God he come to no ill.”

“Ill keeps its own road, my Lady, and my young master is never found on it. He'll be here anon. Perhaps,” — and she stooped to move the logs as she spoke, — “perhaps he is safe at Sandys.”

“Jael!”

“Yes, my Lady; facts will be.”

“Facts give way to stronger facts. See that all the men and maids come in to prayers. Some have made a breach in the good custom lately. I will have them all in.”

“Speak to them yourself, my Lady; it will be a long

way better. They have been backening badly in every right thing lately. I am often hard set to manage them."

At this moment supper was served, and Jael threw a lamb's-wool shawl around her lady's shoulders and placed her seat at the table.

In the midst of the meal she saw a sudden change on the face of the serving-man. The loutish chaos of his countenance coloured into life, and a gleam of pleasure brightened his pale eyes. He had heard a footstep that no one else had heard, and the pasty in his hand was only saved from a fall by his mistress's look of sharp inquiry. Before a word could be said the door opened with a swift, noiseless movement, and Captain Nathaniel Kelder entered.

No one could have been more welcome ; but there was a calm gravity in his manner which repressed any extravagant demonstration of feeling. Lady Kelder, however, had a kiss and a whispered word of tenderness which brought tears of joy to her eyes, and the baron such a grasp and glance as interprets the greeting of kindred souls. Then the meal was finished to that hurry of general conversation which usually follows an arrival ; it flitted here and there, to persons and things and events, but touched none of the real subjects of interest until prayers were over and the servants dismissed with the usual blessing, —

"God be with you, each and all !"

"And with you and yours, Master."

The head man lingered a few minutes to render his account and to receive orders for the following day, and during this interval Lady Kelder looked with a fond speculation at her son. She thought of his cousin Anastasia de Burg, and of lovely Mistress Prideaux, and wondered

if he really was in love with either. She never doubted but both were in love with Nathaniel. If this opinion wanted any confirmation in her mind, she found it instantly in the beauty of the young man, leaning with unstudied grace against the high chimney-piece of black oak.

It has long been the false and silly fashion to ridicule the Puritan garb; it is now full time to acknowledge that Puritan gentlemen were dressed gracefully and picturesquely and in the most perfect sobriety of good taste. They thought that dark or black garments were fittest for grave and earnest men. We are now all of the same opinion. They thought laces, perfumes, and jewelry marks of vanity and foppishness. Every true gentleman in Christendom now thinks with them. They thought it more rational to cut their hair a comfortable length than to wear it in womanish curls down the back. What sensible man of to-day will contradict them? High Church men who still delight to nickname them "Roundheads" make a point of cutting their own hair much closer. Yes, even in the matter of dress, the Puritan was wise and brave beyond his time.

Nathaniel Kelder could have chosen no dress more becoming, even if dress had been a subject about which he was troubled. His jack-boots covered his knees; his breeches were of black leather dressed until it was as soft as velvet; his dark doublet showed undersleeves of white linen; and round his neck was a scarf of fine lawn brodered at the edge with a band of needlework, done by his mother's fingers. He was very tall, and had a bright, spiritual face set in soft brown hair, — a face so fine that it gave the impression of being formed of some rarer thing than flesh and blood. A smile made it luminous. His gray eyes were large and dreamy, the down-

ward sweep of the eyebrows toward the lashes of the eyes when they were raised indicating not only a tender heart, but a disposition to melancholy. A mouth of great refinement, candid and loyal, softened the threat of his resolute chin; and he had an air of distinction which was not consequent alone to the condition of his good birth, but was partly the result of acquired self-restraint. Nathaniel Kelder had the mastery over his spiritual man. He could cross his will without a mutiny.

It was a relief to the family when the door was closed upon them and they could speak freely together; for servants if more faithful in those days were not less curious, and Master Nathaniel's journey to London had been a matter of speculation among them.

"There be a woman in it," the head man said among his fellows; "there be a woman in it. I met De Burg's man in Kendal market, and I dilly-dallied an hour with him, talking of Mistress De Burg and what gentlemen were her servants now; but at the long end, what signified? He let no light into things. I could make nought of him, back nor edge."

"You had much to do to name young master with Mistress De Burg, — a proud-souled madam that is hey-go-mad for the Stuarts and their kind."

"There 's no need to be put about, Jael. It breaks no squares to say that whether Stuart or Cromwell be master, we be servants; and I do think that young master have been in London about the De Burgs. It 'll turn out so, you 'll see it will."

Primitive natures who trust to their natural instincts are rarely mistaken. Nathaniel Kelder had been to London in the interest of the De Burgs. For although the friendship between the families had been broken by political differences, the tie of kinship was of stronger

stuff; and when De Burg was threatened by the law, and his lands in danger of confiscation, Kelder had voluntarily offered himself as his cousin's security.

"What success, Nathaniel?" he asked.

"Better than was to be hoped for, Father. I had two interviews with the Lord Protector, and at the first moment he remembered you. He said, 'Kelder's word is bond for a dukedom;' and then he asked how you fared, and anon he turned to his desk and wrote somewhat concerning the business; afterward he bid me dine that night at the palace."

"What think you of him now?"

"What I ever have thought. There is no man in England to stand beside him. The glance of his eyes pierced me like a spear. While I was present an officer entered with a report concerning the plot of the Fifth Monarchy Men. His anger was great; but he shut close his mouth, and I saw he was reining up by a strong effort the prancing passions within him."

Kelder was much moved by this information. In his own heart was a strong leaning toward these fervent visionary watchers for the visible coming of Christ the King and the reign of the saints on earth. Unknown to any soul he had cherished the same longing. There was a high hill behind Kelderby, and many a morning he had climbed it, and looking toward the east, watched for the glory of the Second Advent. He was sorry that those who watched with him should take up carnal weapons and make divisions, and could hardly believe it until Nathaniel said, —

"This officer brought with him the standard which they had prepared, — a fine one truly. 'T was folded close; but Cromwell, with a strange power, shook it

open. So I saw that it was a lion couchant, and the motto written, 'Who shall rouse him up?' I would you had seen the Lord Protector as he stood holding the standard. His face was like a battle-cry; but oh, the sadness in his eyes! I shall never forget it."

"Sure 't is a wonder so great a man should think of dining; but I 'll warrant he kept his dinner-hour, plots and standards and all to them! And pray what palace honours he now?"

"He is at Hampton Court, Mother."

"Those Cromwells at Hampton Court! Sure 't is a sight to make one think. Elizabeth Cromwell in the seat of the queen! I marvel not if she forget whence she came."

"Dear heart, let the women alone. Oliver holds the sceptre of England by right divine, and Mistress Cromwell is a godly consort to him."

"He has long wanted the king's place; he has gotten it then, it seems."

"The place wanted him. I, and many of my judgment, know that England is pleased and well content that he should be there."

"Not all content, as these Fifth Monarchy Men show."

"Such out of a godly jealousy misunderstand him. In time he will make his work clear."

"But herein others are of a like dissatisfied mind," said Nathaniel. "Many Christians of good quality complain of the spiritual bondage in which he leaves them. A deputation of the people called Quakers was waiting at Hampton Court. I saw not its manner of reception, but they also say that 'Cromwell understands them not;' nor are they wiser concerning his way of dealing with them."

"'T is most likely," interrupted Lady Kelder, scornfully. "They are a silly set, so full of themselves that they have no room for the grace of God. Quakers, forsooth! God give us patience when we speak of them! And as for the Lord Protector being beyond their wisdom, 't is most likely. A down day for General Cromwell when he can fold himself to their size! If you will tell me shortly what is to be done with your cousins De Burg, I will leave you to discuss the Cromwells. I find them not so pleasant a subject for my sleeping thoughts."

"De Burg has permission to remain within his domains. He is not to go beyond them."

"God knows he will cross seas whenever he has matter to carry the king. I mean Charles Stuart."

"He is to give his word not to cross seas."

"His tenfold oath would not bind him."

"Then you must know that my father is surety for his word. If it cannot be depended upon, we stand to lose ten thousand pounds forfeit."

"Baron, you have done a wicked thing. Why should you endanger your own estate to save De Burg's? Conceive how merry a business it will be for him to cheat and mock his Puritan cousin! I say, it was ill done to pledge your land."

"Dear Joan, I pledged my word. I will pillar my word with my land. Is my land worth more than my word? I trow not."

"De Burg called you traitor, and in the beginning of this fight he did you many an ill turn. The Lord of Hosts has given our side the victory; 't is an open insult to his mercy to make friends with your foes."

"De Burg was my cousin before he was mine enemy. My mother was his mother's sister."

“David says —”

“Joan, I go not back to Sinai. He that came out of Nazareth said, Love your enemies; do good to them that do ill to you.”

Then there was a little silence. Lady Kelder was trembling with anger. A verse of Scripture may bring a wise decision in a question of right or wrong; but it oftener comes like a sword than as a peacemaker. So though it was impossible for her at the moment to dispute so plain an order, she felt that there were ways of meeting it, and she held these in reserve.

Then Nathaniel leaned forward and took her hand, and his bright face drove away the gathering shadows on her brow. “We had a poor dinner,” he said. “If I had been curious about my food, I should have wished myself at your table, dear mother.”

“Mistress Cromwell knows neither how to cook nor how to let cooking alone. 'T is a strange ordering which puts her in royal rooms and royal dress; but many heads have learned to lift themselves not before used to it.”

“She is very quiet, and her dress not so brave nor so becoming as your own. A black velvet she wore, but shabby; and the lawn broidery poor and darned, and wanting that spotless purity which is better in my eyes than broidered bands.”

“I have heard that Mistress Cromwell was not too neat, — a bad fault in a woman; and the Lord Protector was but a sloven ere the days of wearing steel corselets and of sceptre holding.”

“As for the room, there were some fine tapestry hangings, and window curtains of scarlet baize, and a couch covered with fly-coloured damask. And the Lord Protector had an elbow chair, and there were backed

stools for the rest of the company. But the long black table compares not with the carved oak table and chairs of this room; and the andirons were neither so heavy nor so bright as these;" and Nathaniel, as he laid a fresh log across them, lightly touched the brass hearth furnishings which were his mother's pride. So the brass andirons and the carved oak furniture, though but dumb comforters, softened the first stinging sense of the baron's improvident translation of the great Nazarene's command.

In the morning it was decided to inform De Burg as early as possible of the mercy shown him, especially as it was necessary to be explicit concerning the restraints and obligations upon which it was to be continued. "'T is only kind to ride over to Kendal at once, Nathaniel," said the baron. "Suspense is ill company, and De Burg must be an anxious man."

"'T is you, Odelin, that should be the anxious man," said Lady Kelder. "De Burg counts the years of Cromwell's life, and assures himself that with Cromwell dies the Commonwealth. His estate is now loaded with debt. The king returning will cancel all claims. King or Cromwell, he need not fret himself very much. And why go not you yourself? 'T is but right he should take the favour from your hands, and the orders which bind it; right also that he should give you thanks for your kindness. I think not of his promises. I trow he will keep none that sort not with his interest and his inclination."

"De Burg hates an obligation, especially from me. Why force him to say words he means not? I have the approval I want already."

"Consider your own unreason, Baron. You will keep

De Burg out of the temptation to say false words, and you will send your own son into snares laid by the flesh and the Devil hard for any man to resist."

Nathaniel smiled. "Vainly is the net spread in the sight of any bird, Mother. My cousin Anastasia is known to me. I acknowledge her beauty, but I feel it not."

"Nathaniel, the self-confident fall before they know that they are in danger. Anastasia suffers no man to escape her witcheries."

"I have seen her frequently; I am not bewitched."

"The pitcher goes often to the well, and gets broken at last."

"Anastasia will not break my heart, dear mother. I can watch all her wiles, and slip away from them."

"From afar things appear so easy to do. But if you are determined to try experiments with yourself, Nathaniel, at least do it with deliberate question and answer."

Then the horses were brought to the door, and Nathaniel kissed his mother's hand and mounted. His father was to ride part of the way with him, and the two men went slowly together across the moor and up the hill. A couple of lurchers flashed like gray snakes through the bracken around them; and the colts came whinnying, with staring eyes and streaming manes, to watch and wonder at the splendid thrall of their bridled kind. Indifferent to all such matters, they went calmly forward, talking not so much of the business with De Burg as of the Lord's great dealings by General Cromwell.

And afar off Lady Kelder watched them winding round the fells. "I wish this day's work bring not misfortune and ruin," she whispered, and her heart sighed

as she passed inside the door with that still, drawling step too often prelude of sorrow. She was a brave woman by nature, and yet she tainted the sweet spring air with whispers of apprehension. Oh, how difficult it is to speak good-omened words !

II.

BLAME THYSELF.

“O woman, woman, woman! All the gods
Have not such power of doing good to men
As you of doing harm.”

“A generous fierceness dwells with innocence,
And conscious virtue is allowed some pride.”

Who will pity a charmer that is bitten with a serpent, or any such as come nigh wild beasts? . . . An enemy speaketh sweetly with his lips, but in his heart he imagineth how to throw thee into a pit: he will weep with his eyes, but if he find opportunity he will not be satisfied with blood.—
ECCLESIASTICUS xii. 13-16.

NATHANIEL entered Kendal early in the afternoon. It was then a very aristocratic town, full of fine houses built of the mountain limestone. The ripple of the swift running Kent, the pleasant stir of the fresh wind in the poplars, the jubilant notes of the church bells, — all these sounds but deepened the silence and peace of the proud and beautiful city. It seemed to be a proper home for gentlemen and gentlewomen who lived at their ease and who had given their own air of serenity and spotlessness to the place.

In Stricklandgate Nathaniel met the great beauty Mary Bellingham. She was riding a superb Barbary mare, walking it slowly up the wide street, pleasantly conscious of her own loitering and of the creature's impatience at it. It lifted high its dainty feet and let them fall with distinct yet rebellious efforts to realize its rider's

dreamy mood. Nathaniel passed her bareheaded, and the royalist beauty vouchsafed him the shadow of a cold smile. In the thoughtless days of childhood she had once chosen Nathaniel for her valentine. What heart-burnings, what loss of life and love lay between that hour and the present ! Ere he reached De Burg Hall many sad thoughts had followed that glimpse of the lovely face of his boyish sweetheart.

De Burg was an old ecclesiastical house, and was built as such houses were apt to be in the snug shelter of a rich valley. High hills surrounded it, but the long, low building of gray stone spread itself among green meadows and under the shade of ancient sycamores. It had been granted to the De Burgs at the time of the great spoliation in the reign of Henry VIII., and hitherto they had gripped tight to it.

Even in this crisis of his family, Stephen de Burg did not worry himself greatly as to his possessions. He had a firm belief in the downfall of Cromwell ; a firm conviction that the science of government was impossible to the mechanical classes. A few years, more or less, and the king would come to his own and be received gladly by them. A Puritan confiscation might be troublesome, an imprisonment in the Tower even more so, but at any rate they would be claims upon King Charles which he would abundantly pay.

Such ideas made him tolerably comfortable until the Puritan hand was upon his estate and the Puritan threat of imprisonment in his ear. Then he had found his kinsman Kelder to be sufficient for his necessity. He had, however, no gratitude for this gracious interference in his fate ; for De Burg not only loved to go a motive hunting, but he also deliberately hunted for the very worst motive he could find.

“Cousin Kelder has become my bondsman! Nathaniel has gone to London to get the old brewer’s assurance of quit and safety! What of that? These godly fellows have plenty of worldly wisdom. Never trust me if Kelder sees not that the king must soon come back. Then he will expect De Burg to protect Kelderby and Swaffham. Will I? I never pretended to wisdom, but I should be the perfectest fool if I paid such back debts.” And De Burg laughed with harsh amusement at the thought. “As for Nat Kelder, I’ll swear he has been in love with Asia since he was as high as my top-boots; and he thinks ’t would be ‘a comfortable dispensation’ to add De Burg to Kelderby and Swaffham. Fair and softly, my young cousin. ’T will be a miracle if you compass it. Here he comes, with all the assurance imaginable. Lord, how I hate such complaisance!”

For to this mental criticism De Burg had been watching the approach of Nathaniel. He turned with the last exclamation and went to the gate to meet him. More anxious than he would admit, Nathaniel’s promiseful face lifted an unacknowledged weight off his heart. He could not help reciprocating the smile of his visitor as he held out his hand, and said almost merrily, —

“Well, sir, are you come to turn me out of house and home? Am I to visit Tower Hill? Is my head wanted for Westminster or Temple Bar?”

“I come with no such unhandsome news, Cousin. Your undoing is in your own hands, and in none other. In your house and within your boundaries and your native town you are as much lord as ever. Only cross not seas or hold communication with Charles Stuart; if you do, it will be at your life’s peril.”

“Faith! I would as lief hold life from Beelzebub as from Oliver. A pretty topsy-turvy world when an old

fen farmer and brewer says 'thus and so' to English nobles !”

“ You offend uselessly, Cousin. I dispute not that it is a large bill on your patience ; but it must be discharged, or worse consequences ; and for my father's sake sure you will carry yourself wisely.”

“ I will carry myself as suits myself. Fear not ; I will make shift to endure it.”

“ Let me tell you soberly — ”

“ Nay, then, I swear I will have no sober talk from you. All your wisdom won't mend my humour. I am fallen out with the whole world to-day ; but I am mightily obliged to my cousin Kelder, and for his sake — and yours also — I shall think better of a Puritan as long as I live. I pray you go in and refresh yourself. You will find Asia in the garden with two of her present servants ; and we will meet at table for further discourse.”

Nathaniel had in his mind a plan far more to his liking, but he did not care to provoke disputings about it. De Burg was bound for the hills. In their silent places he could safely swear out his passion at the world and the ruling of it. He stimulated his anger with memories of the days in which he had lounged about Whitehall and Hampton Court and drank deeply of every cup of sinful enchantment ; when he had swaggered and bullied with all that mad crowd, and laughed himself into the belief that the solid Saxons of the fen country were a handful of clowns scarce worthy the swords of the courtly nobles.

He was a swarthy man, a little corpulent, fiery, credulous, and false, with the insolent manners which belong to natures so vulgar that they cannot endure any one above them, be it prince or God. There had been times when he had hated the late king as heartily as he now hated Cromwell, — as heartily as he would hate any one

who could put a check upon the license of his will and way. So it had been hard for him to assume any decent amount of gratitude; and Nathaniel, in spite of his lovable disposition, felt that he could have borne a real injury easier than this neglect of a self-evident right.

When De Burg turned away from him, he entered the house. A servant took him to a chamber, and he washed his face and hands and put on a clean band, and then refreshed himself with some cold roast beef and a measure of ale. But it was not a satisfactory meal. The continued absence of Anastasia deepened his feeling of resentment, especially as he heard at intervals the shrill mockery of her laugh and the wilful vibrations of her clear, resonant voice.

He ate with conscious deliberation. If his restless disappointment arose from any remembrance of love for his cousin, it was his duty to cross its demands. And he did so with an over-exacting fidelity. The servants wondered at his slow precision and his thoughtful dallying with a very ordinary dinner. He was really speculating as to whether Anastasia knew of his presence; he was listening for her step, he was involuntarily watching the door. Every time it moved he was expecting to see the dark, piquant, provoking face of Asia de Burg.

But she came not; and when his meal could be no farther prolonged he walked with a slow indifference to the door opening into the garden. Really the indifference was not altogether affected; he had been telling himself that to go to Anastasia was to go deliberately into temptation, and he preferred the temptation to come to him. Somehow the folly that takes us unawares seems more excusable than the folly we premeditate. But why suffer himself to be tried in either way? De Burg had felt the commonest form of gratitude to be a

trial. Anastasia had a pride equal to her father's. If she did not wish to express her obligation, why should he compel her to do so? It was ungenerous. He might at least try to emulate that noble not-caring of the Divine heart which sendeth rain and sunshine alike on the thankful and the unthankful. Thinking thus, he resolved to leave De Burg at once.

But even while wisdom spoke to him, her words were silenced by a clear, peremptory call. It filled the chambers of his ear and the chambers of his heart. He blushed like a girl when she hears for the first time the call of Love, and he answered it as promptly as if it had been the Lord General's bugle on the battle-field. His feet seemed to move without his option; he stamped them on the gravel to assure himself of his own will in the matter, and as he went the same penetrating call urged him again and yet again:

· “Nathaniel! Nathaniel! Nathaniel!”

There were three terraces and she was on the lowest one, but the clear lingering syllables appeared to fill all the space around him. He went rapidly from terrace to terrace, taking the low broad steps he knew not how. On the outermost edge of the lowest there was a fish-pond, surrounded by a wide margin of green turf bordered with sweetbrier, now full of its spring-tide scent. The thyme's perfumed sprig and the delicious odours of wall-flowers and auriculas seemed to make a part of the voice. He could not separate sound and scent; nor did he try.

In a moment or two he saw Anastasia standing on the turf. She was playing battledore with two gentlemen, and with face and arm uplifted was bending slightly forward to catch the feathered toy. In the act she let the battledore drop to the ground, and turned toward Nathaniel.

Her face and throat and bosom were rosy with the exercise, her eyes glinting with mirth, her dark hair tossed into a picturesque mass of curls falling so low as to cover her shoulders, and even partly veil her bosom. Her dress was of fawn-coloured satin adorned with a great number of pink bows, and there were large pink rosettes upon the insteps of her shoes, and long streamers of pink ribbon upon the shepherdess hat, which she had flung upon the grass.

She came to meet him, radiant, wearing all her enchantments. The touch of her jewelled fingers, the scent of her garments, the darting light from her eyes, the slight pout of her beautiful lips, the caressing tones of her voice, took him captive at once. Squire Chenage and Captain Bellingham, with whom she had been playing, watched with a dark scorn a meeting so little to their liking from many points of view. Hating each other cordially, they still more cordially agreed in their hatred of Captain Kelder. With marked hauteur they went to the side of the pond and engaged in a meaningless conversation about the size of the pike and the tench. Nathaniel heeded not the movement; he was scarcely conscious of their presence until Anastasia dropped his hands and went to give them a courteous dismissal.

“My cousin Kelder,” she said, “has been to London on our affairs, and I am in the humour of being pleasant to him. As ’t is the greatest conquest I shall ever make of my pride, you must give me leave to practise the new virtue.”

Captain Bellingham took his discharge with good-humoured raillery. Squire Chenage looked darkly at Kelder, and avowed his intention of “playing the game out with him.”

“You had better not, Squire,” answered Anastasia, with

snapping eyes and emphasis. "He is swifter than you dream of."

It was a trying situation for the two gallants, and they did not bear themselves to advantage in it. Nathaniel's beauty and air of confidence, and Anastasia's cool indifference flustered and irritated them. It brought out the bravo in Bellingham and the bully in the ruder Squire; and somehow their satin doublets and their scented love-locks gave to their mien of real anger an air of swagger and fanfaronade which was altogether unjust.

Dimly conscious of this effect they hurried across the terrace, swinging their feathered hats, and feeling in the hot passion of the moment their ribboned points and boots trimmed with ruffs of Flemish lace to be quite out of keeping with the rude greeting they would have been delighted to exchange with the young Puritan. Both of them glanced at Nathaniel as they passed him. He stood by one of the pillars which supported the lower steps, and against the white limestone his tall dark figure was a graceful and conspicuous object. Their glance met an instant and courteous response. Nathaniel lifted the high, plain hat which was such an offence to courtly taste, and in so doing revealed more distinctly the strong yet delicate beauty of his countenance and the close clustering curls of his bright brown hair.

It is not necessary to record the few emphatic words with which Chenage and Bellingham expressed their feelings; those of Anastasia, though sweet and pleasant, had a deeper malice, a more enduring and far-reaching unkindness. She stood at Nathaniel's side, the incarnation of mocking beauty, watching the two young men out of sight. It was not necessary for her to speak; Nathaniel understood the glint of her eyes, the almost unconscious

rhythm of her body, caricaturing the ungraceful walk of the be-ribboned swains.

“I admire how these men dress like women,” she said at length. “Give me, Cousin, the privilege to ridicule them a little. For my own liking I would that men ever wore leather or steel. Chenage in his leather hunting-suit is very much of a man, and Bellingham in his uniform not so laughable as in purple and white satin. Upon my word, Cousin,” and she looked steadily in his face, “I find you extremely handsome and extremely well dressed. Come now, sit down, and you shall tell me how Mistress Cromwell lives in the king’s house. ’Tis said she goes into the palace kitchen, and is never so happy as when among the pots and pans. People that pretend to know say so.”

Then Nathaniel spread his cloak upon the lowest step of the flight, and they sat down together; but he told her first of the Protector’s clemency, and explained the easy terms upon which it was proposed to save the lands of De Burg. He passed by as lightly as possible his own and his father’s share in the arrangement, and Anastasia was not generous enough to acknowledge it. Still it was easy to see that in spite of her affected recklessness she had been exceedingly anxious as to the result of the visit to London.

“It is simple salvation,” she said. “I have been planning a life for myself when I should be turned out of De Burg.”

“You would have come to Kelderby. The house is big enough for six families. There are even rooms which I have never seen open.”

“Haunted rooms, or my life for it. All the rooms in De Burg are haunted. I have seen the ghosts many a time and oft.”

“Asia!”

“I’ll swear it. Old abbots and monks gliding about, looking for the souls they have lost. But I should not have gone to Kelderby. I should have gone to the king at Paris. ’T is but a beggarly court he keeps there; but he hath a gay heart, and by all accounts there are merry times. I can sing a song with any one. When women can’t work, they can sing. Heigh-ho! ’T is a queer world, dear Cousin.” And she moved closer to him and gently stroked his hand.

Every caressing movement made life in its innermost room tremble with pleasure. He was speechless under her charming. If he could have spoken he might have broken her spell; but he sat passive, watching the rich carnation of her cheeks and the sensitive play of her tempting lips.

“Yes, I could have sung the king out of a dukedom; and though you sit dumb as an owl, I vow I will sing you out of a chorus.” She darted like a bird across the band of turf and took from the margin of the pond a lute. “Listen!” she cried. Then a wild sylvan melody was flung into the air, — a melody that seemed to be made of the glad rustling of trees and the gurgling of running waters. Her voice lifted the tinkling notes higher. She came forward slowly, singing as if her whole being was nothing but a song, —

“A North Country lass
Up to London did pass,
Although with her nature it did not agree;
Which made her repent,
And so often lament,
Still wishing again in the North to be.
Oh, the oak and the ash and the bonny *ivy tree*,
They flourish at home in the North *Country!*”

“Sing, Cousin, —

“ ‘ Oh, the oak and the ash and the bonny ivy tree, ’ —

“ Sing, Cousin, sweet Cousin, sing, —

“ ‘ Oh, the oak and the ash and the bonny ivy tree,
They flourish at home in the North Country ! ’ ”

She was standing before him, her eyes were searching his ; she stooped slightly forward, and the witchery of the bright impassioned face was irresistible. His lips parted at her next imperative glance, and, willing or unwilling, without any conscious consent, he was mingling his voice with hers, and telling all the flowers and birds around them, —

“ Oh, the oak and the ash and the bonny ivy tree,
They flourish at home in the North Country ! ”

They sang the whole song through, and at every verse they drew closer together. When she laid down the lute her head was on Nathaniel's shoulder and his arm was around her waist. She had sung her soul into her face. It was gazing passionately from her eyes, it was beating at the door of her lips. For a few moments speech was the most impossible and the most unnecessary of things, the significant language of music had said so much more than common words would have ventured upon. That *Da Capo* of the last two lines had broken down the flood-gates of feeling and let both hearts flow together.

The silence which followed was to Nathaniel even sweeter than the song. He did not venture to break it. But in a few moments Anastasia wearied of the tension, the light faded from her face, the enthusiasm of the strife was over. She felt that she had conquered, and she made haste to claim the spoils.

“ Nathaniel ! ”

“ Asia ! I believe you have been playing upon my heartstrings. I am in a trance of — ”

“You are going to say ‘I love you.’ I swear you shall not say such foolish words. I am weary of hearing them.”

“What then shall I say?”

“Say nothing. What will you *do* for me?”

“What is it you wish me to do?” He spoke almost in a whisper, and with a singular soul reluctance.

“Ah, me! Help me about my brother John. If you help me not, he and I are both undone.” Her eyes were brimming with tears; she gazed pitifully into Nathaniel’s face, and then gave way to unrestrained weeping.

Nathaniel was shaken soul and body between his pity for the woman and his indignation at the thing she had asked him to do. From his earliest youth John de Burg had been a reprobate. Hating the discipline of his father’s authority, he had fled to sea when but fourteen years old and joined the Turkish pirates who at that time ravaged the west coast of England. For the tyranny and extravagance of King Charles had left all the forts and castles of the west unguarded; their villages were frequently plundered, and many Christian men and women were captured and sold into a cruel and hopeless captivity.

And John de Burg had led these infamous pirates to the coasts of his own county. His boyish form had been recognized in several attacks. ’T was even said that he had lured four of his father’s tenants to the ship, which had carried them away. Such an apprenticeship to crime had brought forth its natural results. He was now a man of thirty-eight, and he had made his name a terror to all merchant vessels; for he attacked indifferently English or foreign crafts, and the dollars and doubloons of Spanish galleons, or the sugar and timber of Bristol and Colchester ships, were alike his prizes. He had even taken

the spoils of the sea from the hardy fishers of Newfoundland. As for the sailors of the captured vessels, a miserable choice of fates was given them, — they could join De Burg's fleet of pirates and slavers, or be sold into slavery, or die.

King Charles, whose clemency could generally be bought, had been compelled to pass sentence of outlawry on De Burg; and Cromwell had sent a ship to take him on the high seas, and hang him at the yard-arm of his own vessel. It was evident, then, that he had been badly pressed. Nothing but a feeling of desperation could have driven him off the sea, and back to a home in which he had not a friend but the half-sister who had seen him only twice, and then by stealth.

Yet Anastasia had never felt so true sympathy for any living creature as for this graceless brother. The tie of blood, now so much weakened by the selfishness engendered by civilization, had then its primitive strength; and upon this basis she had built up a wonderful and mysteriously romantic affection. For though she had seen so little of her brother, he had not suffered her, after their first stolen interview, to forget him. Strange men had brought her at intervals presents from him which she thoroughly appreciated, — jewels and brocades and fine lace, curious boxes and scents, and not infrequently little leather bags full of gold pieces.

And John de Burg really had for his sister a feeling more akin to unselfish love than seemed possible in a nature so perverted. In their clandestine and dangerous interviews she had charmed him. He felt proud of the fair girl who gave him her heart without inquiries or stipulations, and who never reproached him with the past or asked anything for the future. He had frequently taken great risks to send her tokens of his re-

membrance ; and when at last he found himself forced to fly from his enemies instead of fighting them, he had thrown himself without a doubt upon her love and resources.

Hitherto she had defied suspicion by her very boldness. She had secreted him under his father's roof for six weeks. Nor had she found it very difficult to do, for she had ever ruled her household with careless prodigality. There was in De Burg Hall none of that methodical surveillance which was the custom and delight of the ladies of that time. De Burg lived for his outdoor sports, and was satisfied if the demands of his appetite were met in a way which his taste approved. His dining-room and his sleeping-room were the only apartments in his house he visited, unless there was company of sufficient degree or number to make it necessary to open the guest parlours and chambers. But during the last four years such occasions had been rare. The king in exile drained his loyal nobles and gentry of money ; they had little left for private entertainments.

As for Anastasia, she lived only for her own delight. She ate delicately, and dressed beautifully, and read the ponderous romances of the day, or amused herself with the peculiarities of her lovers. She held the reins of the household in a very slack hand, and the servants naturally took their lives as easily as possible. None of them, at least, thought it necessary to clean rooms which were not to be used ; and Anastasia was now thankful to herself for her indifferent housekeeping.

John de Burg had therefore unmolested possession of a chamber in the main wing ; and he kept the key, so that it could not be carelessly entered from the outside. It also communicated, by another empty room, with a small corridor upon which Anastasia's own apartment

opened. At first she had found difficulty in procuring a sufficiency of food ; but she soon hit upon the plan of asking her lovers to eat with her, and then giving them the credit for the plenteous meals which disappeared from her table. And she made so many adroit suggestions and such merry talk about their able appetites that no one for some time suspected her sincerity in the matter.

But within the last week a strange, uneasy feeling had been growing in the household. A personality cannot be long unfelt ; and the personality of John de Burg was too potent not to find out and penetrate the human element surrounding it. De Burg was the first to become restless under this unseen influence.

“ I ’ll swear I heard a strange footstep last night, Anastasia, on the chamber’s floor.” And he looked at his daughter with a glance the deeper interrogatory of which she perfectly understood.

But she met his suspicious inquiry with a mocking raillery.

“ None of my present servants have the spirit to venture so far. I was reading ‘ Palexandre,’ the wearifullest of books, I think ; and I heard nothing but the rats and the mice. I pray goodness they eat not up the velvet and leather furniture.”

“ Then concern yourself a little about it.”

“ I have a month’s mind to do so, — if one only knew what might come of Cousin Kelder’s interference in our affairs.”

This conversation had occurred a week previously, and since then first one servant and then another had either by look or word shown a sense of something unusual. They could not define, they could not localize the influence ; but they felt its presence.

So then it had become evident to Anastasia that her brother must remove; and as soon as she saw Nathaniel she fixed upon him as a proper person to rely on. She remembered his passionate adoration of her in days past; she believed that she could yet move him to carry out her will. But between those days and the present hour lay a lifetime of action and emotion. The youth had become a man. When she played with his heart nine years before, Nathaniel was but twenty-two, full of enthusiasms and unbroken faiths. And Anastasia, then in her sixteenth year, had still illusions left, and possible longings after things lovely and lovable.

She forgot the stern school in which her young lover had since been graduated. She had not seen him at that burial which thrilled the stoutest hearts in England, when the Puritan hosts, marching bareheaded, laid the great Hampden in the chancel of his parish church. As they carried the hero to his grave, thousands of human voices were uplifted together in the lofty melancholy measures of the ninetieth Psalm:

“Lord, thou hast been our dwelling-place in all generations.”

That psalm had been Nathaniel's consecration hymn. To its pathetic imploration he had given his heart to God and his sword for England's freedom.

But Anastasia could have no conception of such a scene; still less could she imagine that miraculous covenant between his soul and its Maker which made that hour the most solemn of Nathaniel's life. For he had been alone with God, though surrounded by an army; and through the mighty human chorus, rising and rolling like a flood until it was lost in the upper spaces and the farthest horizons, he had heard the still small voice of the Divinity.

Anastasia remembered only his youthful infatuation, his eagerness to do for her any impossible thing. She took no account of the fact that he had since known all the fierce joy of battle-fields, where lofty enthusiasms fought in very deed against principalities and powers and spiritual wickedness in high places, and where piety, exasperated to warlike vehemence, bound "kings with chains, and their nobles with fetters of iron," and contended to the death for "the faith once delivered to the saints."

The old Nathaniel was dead, and Anastasia knew not the one she was trying to mould to her wishes with blandishments and tears. He looked at her indeed with a kind of pity, but also with shame and anger. Had she come to him in grave and sorrowful womanhood, acknowledging her brother's crimes, and pleading for some space for his repentance, he could have respected her claim, and perhaps persuaded his conscience to err on mercy's side; but it humiliated him to be sought with fleshly enticements. Would he grieve the Holy Spirit within him for a wanton love? Would he sell his honour for a woman's kiss? He was in arms against her beauty even while she laid her hand in his and looked with bewitching entreaty into his eyes. Yet all his senses trembled to her touch; he knew that he could hold no parley with the temptress. He rose, and standing before her, asked, —

"What do you wish, Asia? Tell me plainly."

"For God's sake take John back to Kelderby with you! You offered father and myself a home if— if that old knave in London had taken our own from us. Well, then, I have every reason to expect that you will give John a single room, and find him bread and water till his ship comes for him. He has had word that within

ten days it would be by Barrow. Nathaniel, hide him until he can get off to sea ; and then if you want a loving heart, you will be sure to find it here."

"Do you know what you ask, Asia? John de Burg has been outlawed by both the king and the Commonwealth. Herein you would make me the aider and abetter of his crimes. Your father —"

"My father would kill John on sight. You pretend to religion ; have mercy, then. No one will suspect you ; not even old Noll."

"It is beyond belief that I should use the honour of my father's name to cover a villain. Nor will I so far wrong the clemency of the Lord Protector. I have indeed neither list nor leisure to meddle with John de Burg ; for he is a high-sea robber, a man-stealer, a woman-stealer. He has committed more murders than he can remember."

"'T is the fashion of the time to steal and kill. John is no worse than many who gain honour by the trade." She spoke with a pointed emphasis that made Nathaniel tingle. She put tears scornfully away, and looked with a blazing but beautiful defiance at him.

"You must know that your brother lured into hopeless slavery three men who had been his playfellows, — betrayed them, like another Judas, with a kiss."

"Faith, they had once told lies on him. He owed them a grudge, and he paid it. He did right ; and you will be wise not to put yourself in like danger. Oh, Nathaniel !" and she rose and placed her hands upon his shoulders, "dear Nathaniel, for my sake take John with you."

Her lovely face was close to his ; he flushed and trembled, and felt an almost irresistible desire to kiss the sweet pouting lips and fold the pleading woman to his heart.

A moment's hesitation would have made him her slave ; but he did not hesitate. Though troubled and quivering through all his being, he gently removed the small hands which would have bound him, lifted his hat, and without a word made her a parting salutation with it.

The high, uncompromising hat typified the man's determination. She looked at Nathaniel, and then gave up the battle. He was ascending the steps of the terrace ; she realized that she had totally failed. Then a storm of anger and scorn overwhelmed her ; and as she could not relieve herself in speech, she followed Nathaniel's slow but determined steps with a railing song, —

“ A brewer may be a Parliament man,
For there the knavery first began,
And brew most cunning plots he can,
Which nobody can deny.”

Nathaniel was but a few steps before her, but he neither hurried his pace nor looked behind, though the mocking words followed him with a shrill intensity, —

“ A brewer may be as bold as Hector,
Topsy-bold with his own nectar,
A brewer may be a Lord Protector,
Which nobody can deny.”

Nathaniel was as one who heard not. He turned from the terrace into the courtyard with the saucy tones ringing in his ears, and was thankful to find his horse saddled and ready to mount.

A great depression had fallen upon him. He galloped furiously from the place ; he felt the stress of a man fleeing for his life. His heart ached for the woman he had just left ; and his conscience, — that unseen judge, — accused, accused, and accused him. Of what folly and self-sufficiency he had been guilty ! At that hour he understood why David asked to be delivered from “ pre-

sumptuous sins." The Holy One had taught men to ask "Lead us not into temptation;" but Nathaniel knew that he had defied and dallied with temptation, and if he had escaped, it was as a bird from the snare of the fowler. The fear of the struggle was still on him; and though he rode hard, conscience was never behind him. To all his excuses it had the one inexorable answer, "Blame thyself."

III.

“THE WAY TO REST.”

“Christian saw the picture of a very grave person, and this was the fashion of it : It had eyes lifted up to heaven, the best of books in its hand, the law of Truth was written upon its lips, the world was behind its back, it stood as if it pleaded with men, and a crown of gold did hang over its head.”

“Gathered from many sects the Quaker brought
His old beliefs ; adjusting to the thought
That moved his soul the creed his fathers taught :
One faith alone, so broad that all mankind
Within themselves its secret witness find, —
The soul’s communion with the Eternal Mind ;
The Spirit’s Law — the Inward Rule and Guide.”

BEYOND Milnthorpe village Nathaniel came in sight of the woods which encircled Sandys Hall. He had been dimly conscious through all his spiritual turmoil of the glory of the setting sun and the clouds floating and burning in the west with the hue of a carmine-coloured flame ; but when he passed through the park gates the splendour had faded away, and the cumulus masses lay dead and ghostly in the cold gray air. The silent, colourless land scene added its pathos to his troubled mood ; and some strange sympathy with it made him draw rein and give his weary horse permission to walk soberly through the wooded avenues. They were already misty with the vapours from the mountains and the sea, and to his excited mind were full of images as mysterious and incoherent as the background of dreams.

When he came within sight of the house he forgot himself in the sad fate of its old possessors. For the last of the family had fallen in the battle of Marston Moor, fighting for the king, and the estate had subsequently been sold by the Puritan Parliament to Roger Prideaux, a wealthy goldsmith of Paul's Walk, London. Roger was a Westmoreland man; and the hope of his heart, as he saw his wealth increasing, had ever been to buy a home in some sweet valley of his native county. The fact that there was no heir to Sandys, and that he would not therefore be dwelling in the rooms of any unfortunate living man, decided him in the purchase of Sandys Hall.

He had shown a singular respect and even tenderness toward its original holders. The portrait of the last Sandys still hung in its place over the hearthstone of the great dining-hall. The furniture had been renovated and not removed; the ornaments and pictures, though many of them objectionable to Puritan taste, were still in their places. Sometimes he had thought of casting the latter away; but the pictured faces had always pleaded for themselves, and in the ornaments his daughter Olivia found pleasure. And if Olivia saw no harm in the Indian gold and silver work, the sandal-wood and ivory carvings, surely there could be none; for Olivia had a virgin conscience, pure as the snow and clear as the light.

Nathaniel remembered very well the young Lord Sandys. The night before he left the home which was to see him no more forever, Nathaniel met him upon the road which he had just traversed. Where in all the universe of God was the young man now? It was with this solemn thought in his heart that Nathaniel reached the door of the house. Roger Prideaux met him there. He was a spare man of medium height, with the shrewd face of a successful tradesman. But his eyes were the eyes of a

mystic, — wistful, speculative, so full of light that the dropped eyelids were almost transparent.

"Nathaniel, thee is welcome. I have been thinking prayerfully of thee all this afternoon."

"I confess that I needed it. I have been too blind to go right, and too presumptuous to stand still. But I observe that you have many lights, and the appearance of company."

"We have Friends here this night whom thou hast wished to know."

Then he led Nathaniel to a room on the ground floor which he had often occupied, and a servant brought him his saddle-bag. And he was not sorry to reflect that this bag contained a handsome change of clothing; for he noticed in crossing the hall that many people were passing up the great staircase of polished oak, — beautiful women in shining satins, with their hands lightly resting on the arms of their husbands or lovers. And he thought of the excellently beautiful Olivia, and felt that the utmost nicety of apparel was but the most obvious of duties if a man ventured into her presence.

When he left his room Roger Prideaux was waiting to offer him the sunset meal. "We have eaten already," he said; "but thou must have something to strengthen the flesh, for it cannot feed at that table where the spirit waits and is satisfied."

"To say truth, I am in a hungry humour, Roger, and at this present the pullet and white wine are extremely tempting."

"Thou hast been to London, I know."

"I have."

"And thou hast seen Oliver Cromwell?"

"Yes, I saw him."

"Then thou sawest a man who has had many secret

conflicts and baptisms, but who when the time of trial came has not been able to stand to the unfoldings of duty."

"I think surely that he has done great things for England."

"If thou wouldst remember how many of God's people are buried alive in holes and dungeons: hearts broken, homes desolate, men and women of whom the world is not worthy suffering daily scourgings and oppressions! And he whom we have made Protector cares for none of these things."

"Cromwell is beset on every hand. Give him time; he will right all these wrongs."

"But thou knowest in such grave matters the instant time is the fittest time."

"I have seen this, Roger, that the Quakers are a sort of men very impatient and unreasonable. They will have their own way, even though it run against law and custom and all men's liking for it. They preach peace, but their lives provoke to a constant breach of the peace; and they stand so stiff in their own judgment that no man can convince them otherwise."

"I am right glad of it. And if it please God, prisons shall be schools for prophets and nurseries of strong men in Christ Jesus."

"Three thousand Quakers are now in prison, Roger. If they are indeed bearers of a true message, how can they deliver it? Even the Word must fail, if it have not way."

"The Word will run to and fro till it fill the earth. Three thousand prisoners can do nothing; but God and three thousand prisoners can do all things."

"I doubt it not. But it seemeth to me that the way of moderation is better than the way of martyrdom."

While I was in London a Quaker entered the Protector's presence in Whitehall. He uncovered not his head, he used not the commonest civility, and he rated Oliver as Elijah rated the wicked Ahab. My Lord Stanley told me that the Protector was patient with him, and when it came to Scripture routed him with his own weapons. And when he saw that the Protector could give him verse for verse he argued no longer, but he took from his pouch a linen cap, and tore it in two with a stern passion, saying, 'Thus shall the Lord rend the kingdom from thee and from thy family.' Men like not to be prophesied against; and they judge Cromwell wide of the mark who think he can be terrified into any course of action."

"Nathaniel, when thou hast the true wisdom thou wilt speak more wisely."

Then the conversation turned to more personal matters, and soon flagged a little; for Nathaniel saw that Roger Prideaux's heart was not with him. As they left the room they passed a long panel-mirror, and the young man glanced at his figure in it. His black doublet and white-laced band, his breeches with a black ribbon at the knees, his silk stockings, and low shoes fastened with silver latchets, set off in a noble fashion his fine form and spiritual face. And there was an expression about the lips which strengthened it pleasantly; for Nathaniel judged rightly that he was to be brought under the influence of Quaker doctrines, and he was fully making up his mind to keep his own convictions intact.

They crossed the main hall and ascended the stairs to a large and lofty parlour on the next floor. It was well filled; and the company were mostly of Nathaniel's own social class, known to him as men known to one another.

other who live within certain boundaries, and who meet on market-days and on Sabbath-days with the same motives. There was Squire Godlee, and Squire Salkeld, and the young heir D'Acree with his two-months' bride, and the Rev. John Duttred, the Independent minister, and old Captain Zoltone, Edmond Heron, Gilbert Lamplon, and Walter Grandale, all middle-aged soldiers, with the scars of battle upon them.

Nathaniel saw all these as he entered, but only as background to two other personalities. One was Olivia Prideaux. She sat apart from the rest within the embrasure of a projecting window. Her hands lay listlessly in her lap; she was doing nothing; she was not even listening. But there was a wonderful light on her calm face, the faint bright smile of one who thinks much of heaven and of all sweet, innocent things. For Olivia Prideaux had those vehement longings after God which spring up in young hearts. She delighted to go apart, to close all avenues of sense, to retire into those unseen depths of the spirit wherein lies the image of God; because she had found, even in childhood, that part of our finite nature which borders on the infinite, that gate through which God enters in to dwell with man.

She did not perceive the approach of her father and Nathaniel. After a moment's hesitation Roger Prideaux passed her without a word, and Nathaniel felt constrained to the same course. Then he looked at the group toward which he was advancing, but mainly at the man who sat in a large chair on one side of the blazing fire. The majestic figure, the noble sweetness of the face, the luxuriant hair,—not cut short, Puritan fashion, but falling upon the shoulders, with a slight natural curl in it,—the impressive manner in which he was speaking, and the rapt attention of those who

listened to his words, made an instant impression upon Nathaniel.

Duttred leaned against the high chimney-piece with a disputatious aspect. D'Acree rested his hand upon the back of his bride's chair, and his face reflected the light on the speaker's. The rest of the men were in different attitudes, but they were all standing. The women had drawn their seats in a circle round the hearth. Men and women alike were in Puritan dress. Some, however, had discarded the lace wrist-falls and neckbands, and wore their silk or velvet or broadcloth without trimming of any kind, save the spotless lawn kerchiefs covering the bosoms of the women and the throats of the men.

"George," said Roger Prideaux, when they reached the side of the speaker, "this is my neighbour, Nathaniel Kelder."

Then George Fox rose and took Nathaniel's hand, and gazed at him with those piercing eyes which more than one judge found themselves unable to bear. "I have heard of thee, Nathaniel," he said; "now I see thee, and of the rest God will take care." As he spoke he looked at Nathaniel and he loved him, and there came into both men's faces that mysterious something which is the recognition and salutation of souls. This incident scarcely interrupted the conversation. Slowly relinquishing Nathaniel's hand, Fox sat down and turned his solemnly radiant face upon Duttred.

"Thee must not say that this doctrine of the indwelling Christ is a new one. Oh, no! To it give all the Scriptures witness. This is that divine change described by Paul, when he exclaims, 'I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me.' This is that Divine union which Christ willeth, 'I in them, and Thou in me, that they may be

made perfect in one.' This is that glorious fellowship promised: 'If a man love me, . . . my Father will love him, and we will come unto him, and make our abode with him.' Christ in us, the beauty of holiness, the hope of glory, — this is the keynote of the Gospel."

The wonderful magnetism of Fox's voice, charged with faith, thrilling with love, broke into the stillness of Olivia's soul. She moved like a spirit, and laying one hand on the back of Fox's chair, said with an invincible conviction, —

"We know that this testimony is true. You have heard, Friends, how the bird halcyon has ordained for it a week of wondrous calm when the year is at its wildest and roughest. Then upon the waves she builds her nest. Christ within us! In this hope the soul builds for herself a marvellous covert, which not only floats upon the waves of time, but charms them into stillness; so that in the very heart of storms our souls enjoy the halcyon days."

She spoke in a rapture of peace. Her voice was low and even, and had the softness and remoteness of dreams. Her face was illumined from the light within. Nathaniel's heart trembled with joy that was as pure as it was undefinable. At that moment he thought nothing of the girl's personal loveliness: it was her pure soul that charmed his soul, and he longed to hold communion with it.

After a moment's pause Duttred said querulously, "This is going too far. It gives to our vile bodies too much honour."

"John Duttred," Fox answered, "who gave thee permission to speak spitefully of the body? It is easy to call the body 'vile' and then use it vilely. But we *have* this treasure in earthen vessels, and our bodies *are* the

temples of the Holy Ghost ; and he that hath this hope purifieth himself, and feareth to defile the sacred place. We must go into the depths of our nature, John, for our repugnance to give the body its due. Is it not sensuality? Men who would not wrong their souls by stealing, or by listening to a Pelagian tenet, eat and drink and riot like pagans. But Christ redeemed the body with his own body."

"Can the Spirit of God dwell with the spirit of man?"

Duttred spoke with a scornful incredulity ; for though religious and faithful to his convictions, he was full of personal jealousy, and therefore unsympathetic. "This is a strange doctrine, Mr. Fox."

"It would be a stranger one, John Duttred, if the Creator, in whom 'we live, and move, and have our being,' should not have direct access to the spirit of his own creatures."

"There are no faculties of our mortal nature adapted for such intercourse. The Church has no service or provision for it."

"Such secret favours dispense with, rather than demand, mortal aid or service. Oh, John ! thee hast not known the prayer of union, when the soul enters into the sweet, solemn solitudes of the Divinity, and sees and hears and feels unutterable things. In these preludiums of heaven, these neighbourhoods of eternity, a mortal man may have such glimpses of God that whether he be in the body or out of the body he cannot tell."

"I enter into no controversy touching things too high for me. No creed has taken knowledge of such a condition, no church provided for it. Even the Fifth Monarchy Men, who pretend to understand Daniel and the Revelation as well as the Ten Commandments and the

Lord's Prayer, fly not so high as this. The Church around us is our best hope and protection."

"The Church around us! Very well, John; but also Christ within us!"

"If this doctrine be true, it is too much truth. Men who hold it are self-hurtors if they speak of it; and, truly, I blame not the civil power for its controversy with them. When men say that Christ is in them, it is all one with saying that they themselves are Christ."

"Oh, no! We are nothing; Christ is all. And what kind of controversy is martyrdom? Doing men to death is not arguing with them. Moreover, I deny the civil power the right to touch a man's conscience. Conscience is placed out of sight; it is neither visible nor tangible. It is inaccessible to stripes. It cannot be bound in prison. While wicked magistrates are making the body suffer, conscience enjoys the Divinity. How then, John, can conscience be accountable to the civil government? Men who try to control it are usurpers of God's own right."

"Well, I know not what Quakers would have; and I wish they knew themselves. As for me, the old religion is good enough."

"The old religion! John, that is what Quakers want, — the religion of Christ, and of the Apostles, and of the primitive church."

"The Church of Christ, which is the kingdom of Christ —"

"Is within us. Its real enemies are within. They are spiritual, and must be fought with spiritual weapons."

"In a word then, how does a man attain to this condition of union with the Unseen?"

"By faith; for faith is the victory over whatever separates from God. Thou knowest what men have done

through faith, — how they have 'subdued kingdoms, wrought righteousness, obtained promises, stopped the mouths of lions, quenched the violence of fire, escaped the edge of the sword, out of weakness were made strong, waxed valiant in fight, turned to flight the armies of the aliens.' If faith can do these things, and more also, can it not open the door of the soul when He knocks, and say, 'Come in and dwell with me?' Can it not give Him the whole heart, and enter into covenant with Him? I can tell, for I have felt Him nearer to me than breathing. He has beset me behind and before, and laid His hand upon me."

Fox rose as he spoke, and an indescribable majesty and authority clothed him as with a garment. His face shone, his clear, sweet voice penetrated into the secret places of every heart. The atmosphere of the room trembled to spiritual influence, and a feeling of infinite tenderness brooded over the small assembly. Duttred stood silent, tears were in his downcast eyes; and when George Fox stepped forward and offered his hand he took it with a troubled, questioning look.

"We are made poor by what we miss, as well as by what we lose, John. Go into thy room and enter into that spiritual communion which is beyond all visibles. Open the door of thy heart and ask Christ to come in and dwell with thee. Verily he will keep his promise." And as Fox stood surety for his Maker he lifted up his face, and it grew like an angel's; and an old man on the outskirts of the little assembly cried out, —

"It is true! It is true!"

But Duttred said coldly, "My desire is to stand still at present, so that the voice of the stranger be not taken for the voice of the Shepherd. Yet I will not flatly contradict or condemn the words spoken, lest I come within

the apostle's reproof for speaking evil of things I understand not." Then looking steadily at Fox, he said, "Pray for me, — peradventure I am wrong, — that I may be led right."

"John, why ask any man to pray for thee? Abide in thyself, and take hold on thy own possession."

Then Duttred explained at some length his views of the Atonement, and the necessity for a formulated creed and a regularly trained ministry. But after Fox's burning utterances his words were cold; for he spoke of Christ in a distant way, as of one holding the central place in a theological system, but far off from daily love and life.

"Oh, no!" answered Fox. "There is no such thing, John, as a system of divinity in the Bible. Nothing there but a living record of personal relations between the Creator and the souls he has made. No dogma in all the book. Only human life touched by the Spirit of God; and as for trained ministers, when God says to a man, 'Preach the Gospel,' he needs no other preparation or authority. Schools cannot make ministers, and God dwells not in temples made with hands. 'I was no prophet, neither was I a prophet's son; but I was . . . a gatherer of sycamore fruit;' but the Lord raiseth the poor out of the dust."

Then the conversation turned upon Cromwell and his government; and Fox vindicated Cromwell in many things, and set lucidly before the assembly the difficult part the Protector had to play between all the sects that were then claiming recognition for themselves and persecution for all others.

"In the high noon of these dog-days of our religious discords," he said, "things are done and spoken which will hardly bear reviewing when the cool of the evening shall come. Between Thomas Edwards writing furiously

against liberty of conscience and toleration, and the Presbyterian clergy complaining 'that men of civil employment usurp the right of preaching, to the great scandal of the kirks,' and the Church of England men, and the Fifth Monarchy Men with Rogers at their head, and the Independents, and other sects too numerous to mention, what is the Protector to do? And I think well of him for the plain words he gave the Presbyterians concerning preaching."

"Doubtless they deserved them, whatever they were," said Duttred; "but I know them not."

"Truly, he answered their complaint with some searching questions: 'Are you troubled that Christ is preached? Is preaching so exclusively your function? I thought the Covenant and the professors of it could have been willing that any should speak good of the name of Christ. If not, I say plainly that it is no covenant of God's approving, nor are these kirks so much the spouse of Christ. I hope,' he farther said, 'that He that ascended up on high may give His gifts to whom He pleases; and if those gifts be the seal of mission, be not envious though Eldad and Medad prophesy.' Are not these words like himself, — strong, stiff, and unbendable?"

"Yes; and John Milton likewise says that 'presbyter' is only 'priest' writ large." And Duttred spoke with a bitterness that made Fox look steadily at him.

"A good man is known by the company he keeps," said Roger Prideaux; "and what say you to Cromwell's? His two secretaries are John Milton and Andrew Marvell; the seraphic John Howe is his chaplain; he has put Dr. Owen over the University of Oxford. And thou knowest, George, that he listened gladly to thee, and brought thee into his house, and desired to talk with

thee again. And thou wilt allow that Friends have been a little demanding with him."

"Not too much so, Roger. When Friends are everywhere robbed and beaten to the death, they have just cause to go to the Protector for protection. However, whether he speak for us or whether he forbear to speak, we are saved by Divine alliance from any danger of defeat."

The company then began to leave, for most of them had some miles to ride over lonely and ill-kept roads. Nathaniel was glad of the peace and quiet of his own room, for the day had been full of emotion and not devoid of physical fatigue. Yet he was not inclined to sleep. He threw some logs on the fire and sat down before their blaze. For the first time he looked curiously at his chair, — a large one of carved oak, covered with Spanish leather. The gilding was worn, the leather had lost its brightness and curious stampings. It showed use, and he began to speculate about the men and women who had sat in it. His eyes roved from the chair to the great bed with its sombre tapestry curtains. What fingers had worked the gigantic shadowy figures that lurked among their folds? Here and there a sword or a buckler in lighter silks gleamed out with a stubborn distinctness which was almost uncanny. The inanimate furniture revealed in the midnight a sort of personality. He could not but imagine the men and women who had known the room before him, and who had gone away forever. The empty chairs, the dim vast couch, the little tapestry stool on the hearth, — each and all had a lonely, mournful look, as pathetic and distinctive as that which hangs around a grave. He felt that the house preserved, like a book, the memory of those who had lived in it.

Into this melancholy atmosphere there came suddenly the memory of Anastasia, — the mocking, brilliant face, the scornful voice, the laughter which he could now feel was but a thin veil for her anxiety. He lived over those moments of temptation, and his face burned, and he felt an intolerable shame in his own weakness and cowardice. He recalled the flight of his fearful soul up those terraced steps, and the heaviness of the body which so reluctantly followed it. Then he began to speculate on the assurance that "there is a spirit in man," and to compare it with the opinion of the Platonists, "that in all minds there is concealed a spark of the same wisdom that exists in the Supreme Being," — the inward light of Quakerism; the light "which lighteth every man that cometh into the world;" the divine light higher than knowledge, higher than grace, higher than love, which is only satisfied with that unity where no man dwelleth.

Hitherto he had lived on the outside of himself, — in his intellect and reason and senses. Now he let everything go, — reasoning, willing, hoping, fearing, — and lost himself in a simple sense of this immediate God, so seldom sought, yet always so passionately longing to be sought and to bless; lost himself until the experience became more real to him than house or home or sun or stars. He knew not how long he sat thus, but he rose trembling and awed with the revelation of this new capability of his nature. It brought him as yet no exaltation, only a solemn, dreadful reverence, mingled with an excessive physical chill and weariness. He lay down and slept heavily, and did not awake in the morning until the sun was high in the heavens. The house was very still. He dressed and went into the dining-room and found that the morning meal was long over,

and that Roger Prideaux had gone with George Fox to Ulverstone.

A servant brought him bread and meat and wine, and he ate and drank with an eager appetite. The food refreshed him physically, and made him able to grasp the spiritual blessing that had come to him, and to feel its power and strength.

Then the bright sunshine, and the singing birds, and all the pleasant sounds and scents of Nature spoke to him, and he went into the garden to enjoy them the better; also, he longed to see Olivia before leaving Sandys, and he hoped to find her there. But the sweet alleys of pleached beeches were all empty of human life. The box and the privet hedges, and all the green palaces of the cherry-trees were full of twittering birds, but in none of the pleasant garden-ways could he find the fair woman he wished to see.

Presently, however, he heard the sound of voices beyond the hedge, and he looked into the meadows and saw her there. She had two of her maids with her, and they were gathering flowers. In a few moments he was by her side. Her apron was full of cowslips, and she opened it and let him press his face to the dewy, scented little blossoms.

“I am going to make them into wine, Nathaniel. Hast thou ever tasted cowslip wine? It is like the dew of spring. I think it hath the sunshine in it, and the scent of daisies and buttercups. My father thinketh it to be a good cordial. He went out early this morning, he and Friend George Fox. George felt drawn toward Ulverstone, and my father was clear to go with him.”

They talked of many things as they went through the long grass, but Nathaniel was like a man in a happy dream. All his life after, he could recall the feeling of

the turf under his feet and the fresh wind blowing across his face. He stopped to listen to her innocent talk of a robin's nest which she had seen, and the great bed of violets under the oak tree, which she had not pulled, because they looked so happy in its shadow. He could find nothing to compare her to. He could pay her no compliments. She was exquisitely lovely and graceful and gracious, but he felt it to be impossible to tell her so.

When they came to the house they went into the large room where Nathaniel had eaten. She took off her hood and sat down with the flowers in her lap, and their delicate field-sweet perfume drifted between them. Then she hid her hands in their golden freshness, and her face caught a kind of glory from their colour. Nathaniel thought her the loveliest flower of humanity that he had ever seen. Usually it was an easy delight to talk with her, but this morning she appeared inclined to stillness; and he even imagined that there was an expression of fear or anxiety in her eyes when she lifted them suddenly.

Once, as she did so, they rested on the likeness over the chimney-piece. They had often spoken together kindly of the dead lord, and Nathaniel felt impelled to describe his speculations on the previous evening concerning the family. It was an age of firm belief in ghostly visitations, and the most reverent souls saw visions and dreamed dreams. There were few large houses without their traditionary spiritual tenants, and to Nathaniel and Olivia it seemed quite natural that the old occupants of the rooms should revisit them. So also, when she looked at the face of the youth who fell at Marston Moor, its melancholy beauty and the predestined fate in its far-seeing eyes touched her with a peculiar nearness of sympathy.

“The world we cannot see is always blending with the world we can see; and I have often had a strange feeling about those who have not been long dead, Nathaniel.”

“Tell your thought to me, Olivia.”

“It is, that those just gone cannot have gone very far away. Dost thou think that I presume too much?”

Nathaniel’s answer was prevented by the entrance of a servant, a middle-aged man called Asa Bevin, who had been with Roger some years in London, and who now filled in Sandys the post of house-steward.

“Olivia,” he said, “here be two constables from Kendal, men of Belial both of them, drunken with wine and sin, and speaking loud, swelling words against the man thou wotst of.”

She turned pale, but calmly answered, “Let them be brought here to me, Asa.”

At the moment, without permission, entered the two rude, half-tipsy fellows, whose natural bluster had been increased by visits to every public-house between Kendal and Sandys.

Olivia looked at the advancing men with a steady face. Nathaniel rose and stood beside her. His attitude was that of a soul alert at every point, but he knew not the business of the interruption, and could not interfere without reason. Yet, as soon as he looked well at the officers, he divined what their errand must be; and he regarded them with such piercing scorn that it was with difficulty the bolder blustered out,—

“Mistress Prideaux, it is not you, but Master Roger Prideaux, we would see.”

“My father is not at home. What is the business you come on?”

“Well, if thou must know, we want t’ man who came here for hiding last night; t’ man called John Whitehead.”

"He came not here last night."

"That's a put-off. He came this morning then; and it is like enough, seeing that he is a proper-looking young man, that you have hid him yourself, Mistress."

"He came this morning, and I have given him food and shelter."

"Then, Mistress, we have a *mittimus* for his arrest, and a warrant to search the house for him, if we are restrained in our duty. Let us at him, or it will, mayhap, be the worse for yourself."

As he spoke he laid his hand upon Olivia's arm, and the next moment Nathaniel had drawn his sword. With the flat side of the blade he struck the offending hand, accompanying the blow with a passionate order to the men to remove their hats in the presence of Mistress Prideaux.

"The Devil take you for a Quaker dog! Who may you be, pray?"

"I am Captain Nathaniel Kelder, a magistrate, and one that stands so much your lord as to see that you carry yourselves as something better than brute beasts."

"We are in our duty, and while in it we fear not the face of clay."

"Nevertheless, I will see that you do your duty decently. Show me your papers."

The men had lived in plenty and had held petty office for some years, but breed is more than pasture. Their peasant nature cowered before the higher type, and with a sulky obedience they handed the writs to their superior.

"Isaac Sandal signs these, I see. Isaac Sandal is my cousin, and much beholden to me. Take care you go not one inch beyond the line of your orders." Then turning to Olivia, he said, —

"Mistress Prideaux, in the absence of your father you

can lawfully withstand these demands, but this is within the compass of your wisdom."

She stood a few moments in perfect stillness; then crossing the room, she opened a door and said clearly, "John, thou art wanted. Fear not."

Immediately from the open door stepped a youth of about eighteen years of age. He had a bright, confident face, and a refined, gentle manner, and he answered cheerfully, —

"The mercy which keeps in heights and in depths, the holy Helper, is with me."

"Help may not come till the last moment, John, but thee will find that it never comes too late. And if there is a bitter cup for thee to drink, remember thy Saviour, and also thy brothers Andrew and James, who perished unshaken and always like themselves, after so many cruel scourgings and crosses."

As she spoke the hands of the officer were on him, and he began to lock the heavy irons about his wrists. Then Nathaniel said angrily, "Leave the young man at liberty. His word is better than chains. I will be his satisfaction."

"Gad! that signifies nothing. I'm not so off-at-side as to take your Honour's word, and the means for a bond are not here, nor have I the freedom to take one."

"Fellow!"

"Better not call me out of my name that way. I'm doing my duty."

"On whose complaint is this arrest?"

"On the complaint of as good a man as any of your breed. Parson Derby's complaint."

"What hath this lad done against the priest?"

"Ask him. To boast of his sins is a thing a Quaker likes right well."

"What is thy fault, John?" Olivia's eyes were full of pity as she dropped them upon the lad's manacled wrists.

"I spoke to the people in the fish-market of a gospel free from rites and rituals, and of the indwelling light which sets the soul face to face with God, and no man-made priest between. And I said that God raises up his own ministers, and they dispense his Word freely, making no bargains, and indeed fearing that sinful commerce which exchanges heavenly things for earthly things. And the priest railed on me, and swore that I hindered his lawful tithes, which were secured to him by the Levitical law. But I told him that if he went back so far he must take notice that under that law not only the priests, but the fatherless and the widow and the stranger had their share of the tithes. And with that his fury was great, and he set the people on me with stones, and there was a riot; but in the midst of it three or four men made a wall for me, and I escaped."

"Ay, and thou saidst a deal more of t' same make; and it would have been a famous thing if thou had been trampled under t' feet of good honest churchmen, — that I say. But my song! thou shall run to thy deserts now, for I'll tie thee to my mare, and she will keep thy feet so busy that thy tongue will have a bit of rest, mayhap. It's high time, I'll go bail for that!"

"I will ride to Kendal with you," said Nathaniel. "And I will take care that you exceed not your warrant, which is to bring John Whitehead in safety. And you shall set the young man on your horse and lead the horse yourself, for I will ride at your side and put my sword against your malice; and if there is any grievance in the matter, I will answer to my cousin Sandal and the priest for it. Come! I am in haste, and will be gone at once."

“When Mistress Prideaux has given us some ale and some bread and meat we will take the road.”

“By troth and faith! you will take the road this very minute. I will stop neither for meat nor drink.”

Nathaniel was in a towering passion, though he restrained its violence, bridling and biting it with a composure and a slow sternness of speech that cowed the craven bullies into a sulky obedience to his orders. He turned to Olivia as he left the room and met her kindling glance with one of tender assurance, and her eyes thanked him without a word. Silently they went to the door together. Nathaniel's horse was ready saddled, and it was brought with those belonging to the two constables. He saw John Whitehead placed upon one of these, and then leaped upon his own animal.

At that moment Olivia stepped swiftly to the side of the prisoner. “John,” she said, “this is the price of eternal peace. Is it too great for thee?”

“We must all pay the price or go empty away. I am thankfully willing. What should it profit if I gained a few years and lost immortal life?”

“‘Look for thy Shepherd, he shall give thee everlasting rest; for he is nigh at hand, that shall come in the end of the world.’”¹

“‘I testify my Saviour openly.’”²

As she spoke Asa Bevin joined them. He carried a silver cup full of wine, and Olivia took it in her hands and raised it to the lips of the youth. He moved his manacled wrists involuntarily, and then bent his head. With a slight effort she held the cup while he drank. Nathaniel saw her lifted face, saw the shadow of apprehended martyrdom in her pitiful eyes, the rapture of apprehended glory in her holy smile. He commanded by his look and

¹ 2 Esdras, ii. 34.

² Ibid. 36.

manner an absolute pause while this sacrament of sacred sympathy lasted. The officers stood still, agape and silent. Asa, with bent head, murmured a half-audible prayer. Nathaniel sat motionless, looking at the bound youth and the ministering maiden. When she moved the spell broke, the picture dissolved, the momentary visitation was over, — was almost as if it had not been. The constables began to grumble and bluster.

"Lend me a nag, Mistress Prideaux," the dismounted man said. "I can't go afoot all t' way to Kendal. I never said as I'd make t' prisoner do it, not all t' way. Come, Mistress, it will be raining full drive afore long."

Nathaniel answered for her: "I will have you step as you purposed a better man than yourself to step. Keep at the side of Master Whitehead's horse. You shall go afoot this day, if you never do it again. Mistress Prideaux, fare you well!" He lifted his hat to the girl he loved so dearly, and then by a sharp movement of his hand indicated the order of the journey.

Olivia watched them out of sight, but Nathaniel never turned his head. She understood the intentness of his nature. She felt it to be right that his heart should be wholly set upon the thing he had resolved to do, for the work was in the way of mercy and justice. It was the righteous indignation of his heart, and not in this case its love, which made him the defender of the helpless. Olivia understood this and she thought the more nobly of him for it.

She sat still a long time, musing in that sympathy which steals upon the meditative mind and grows with thought. Her pale, serious face and eyes of religious purity showed, even in her brooding silence, a certain misgiving. She could not forbear shaping in the future things which made her heart beat quick; for never until that morning had she

thought of a lover. Her life was yet a virgin wilderness, but Nathaniel was just beginning to tinge the horizon of her thoughts.

As for Nathaniel, he would gladly have kept silence and recalled every word she had spoken and every expression which had flitted across her face; but he had long taught himself to subject desire to duty, and he believed it to be his duty to give John Whitehead an "opportunity." So he encouraged him to speak of that wondrous communion which was then not only "great" but also "new" tidings. His own heart burned by the way, but it was all "foolishness" to the two officers. The idea of a Christ far off in heaven was not an uncomfortable one; but a Christ in their own souls, illuminating all the dark corners, and compelling them to purify themselves, was terrifying. Like the Gadarenes of old, they besought such an one to depart.

The conversation, however, so interested Nathaniel that he remained in Kendal until the next day, hoping to obtain the freedom of the youth; but the accusing priest was also judge, and John Whitehead's imprisonment was a preordained sentence. Ironed like a felon he was sent to Appleby jail, — a dreadful dungeon, dark, damp, filthy, and fever-haunted.

With a heart full of pity Nathaniel bade him farewell. But John had that "joy within" which disdained to take into account any outward misery. His bright young face was turned toward martyrdom, but he laid his chained hands in Nathaniel's hands, and said joyfully, —

"This is the way to rest, Nathaniel; this is the way to rest forever!"

IV.

JOHN DE BURG.

“ About some act
That has no relish of salvation in 't.”

“ The wicked flee when no man pursueth.”

“ Of all the virtues justice is the best ;
Valour without it is a common pest.
Pirates and thieves, too oft with courage graced,
Show us how ill that virtæ may be placed.”

THE parting between Nathaniel and John Whitehead was in Kendal market-place. It was raining as it only does rain in that section of England, — full drive, raining and ceasing, and then beginning again. The rifts in the black clouds threw lines of cold, steely light upon the houses, and made them look strange and gloomy. There was also a wuthering wind sobbing through the narrow wet streets, and the natural outlook could scarcely have been more dreary and depressing.

Nathaniel forced his cloak and purse upon John, heeding not the opinion of the by-standers. But, indeed, they were singularly sympathetic ; for the heroic calmness of John before his judge, and his heavenly resignation in the face of so much injustice, engaged the pity of the majority. Englishmen, in the mass, love fair play above everything, and the accusing priest for a judge, with a jury of churchwardens and church officers, did not strike them as fair play ; so that Nathaniel's sympathy was in the main quite

acceptable to the little crowd huddled in the shelter of the archways and the market-stalls. For a man really in earnest about heaven and hell, death and judgment, may be regarded as mad and an object of pity, but he is never a subject for contempt.

Then Nathaniel turned his horse's head toward Kelderby. He galloped with a savage earnestness of purpose, and Nathaniel found himself setting his angry thoughts to the rough natural music of the beating hoofs. He stayed for a few moments at Sandys, but he did not alight. He fancied that Roger was constrained and cold in his invitation to do so, and he did not see Olivia at all.

The circumstance troubled him. He had expected Roger to praise him for his partisanship, and for the trouble he had taken in the affairs of a persecuted Quaker. He had expected, — and he thought not unjustly, — that Olivia would feel an interest in the fate of the young man she had sheltered. In such a storm it was not likely she would be from home, and he thought she must also have seen his approach. But he was judging as mortals do judge from the presenting side of events alone; and in this case the influence of the side not seen was not only undue but perplexing, unprecedented, and incommunicable. In fact it was the influence of Anastasia de Burg, though exerted in a way outside of all his fears or suspicions.

For Nathaniel's refusal to aid in her brother's escape was really a more serious disappointment than he thought it to be. Suspicion follows hard upon mistrust, and the morning after Nathaniel's visit Stephen de Burg asserted, in a manner not to be trifled with, that he was positive he had smelt the odour of tobacco in the upper corridor on the previous night. Anastasia concluded instantly that it

was best to resent this speech as an innuendo against her honour, and this she did with so much anger and such passionate and scornful asseverations of her innocence that for a time De Burg was led to doubt his discernment and the evidence of his senses.

But Anastasia knew that this was but a temporary satisfaction, and as soon as possible she went to her brother. He was in a worse temper than his father, and for the first time she saw in his face the evidence of all the sin and cruelty of which he had been accused.

"It is well you have come, Asia," he grumbled; "I am at the end of my patience. I have been twenty times on the point of setting fire to the old pile. Taking us all together we should make a nice burnt-offering to the Devil."

She turned on him almost savagely. "The old pile can shelter you no longer, John. You must go, and at once."

"Where?"

"To Sandys."

"To the Quaker's?"

"This Quaker is a fool, John; and I'll swear you are ten times a fool if you work him not to your purpose."

Then she stooped toward him and said in a low voice, "If you could 'thee and thou' I should say go as a persecuted Quaker, and Friend Roger would hide thee and Friend Olivia would amuse thee, and thy consolations would be many; but you are altogether too daring and wicked, John, for such a merry disguise. You must wear your own cavalier dress, and throw yourself upon the mercy of the man. I hear he hath a great heart."

"If but one of his servants knew my face, it would be the rope or the deep sea."

"His servants are such as came from London with him.

And you are in so dangerous a taking that you must be another and a better man than yourself."

"Why risk so much? In a few days my ship will be off—"

"In a few hours it may be too late for you ever to reach your ship. You anger me beyond all patience. I have told you how full of suspicion the house is. One of us must break the wonder soon. I have brought you a cloak left by Captain Bellingham at his last visit. Here also is a rapier of my father's and the last goldpieces I have. Be warned and go at once."

"To Sandys? But how? And fit me with a name, since I may not use my own."

"I have considered all. The late lord took with him to the field a poor cousin called Harald Sandys,—a man from the south,—and 't was said that he also died at Marston. Marry! that is a lie for you to contradict. *You* are Harald Sandys; and the name is the more fitting that I hear this Quaker finds a great content in honouring the dead family. So onward to Sandys, for I assure you this matter calls for dispatch."

"'T is some distance, and I am but a poor walker. if it be not on the deck of my own ship."

"I have been riding, and I left my mare tied under the great sycamore. Take her. At Sandys park gates you can turn her loose; she will make shift to find her way home again."

"But listen, Asia—"

"Hush!" She stood with her right hand raised in the attitude of one listening intently. Her face blanched; she whispered in an agony of terror, "That is my father's step! Fly, fly! Down the great stairway! I will keep him in speech till you are away."

"John was quite cool and collected. The cloak, the

rapier, the gold, he forgot none of them, and just as Stephen de Burg sharply tried the handle of his daughter's door, John de Burg stepped noiselessly through the corridor and down the stairway. There were two servants in the distance, but they were deceived by Captain Bellingham's cloak, and they took no notice of his egress. He had mounted the waiting horse and was flying through the park while as yet Anastasia answered her father's demands through the bolted door of her room.

"By God and the Devil, Mistress! I will know who is within your room. Draw the bolt, and let me enter."

"Not on such demand. It stands not with my honour."

In like parleying, every moment growing more passionate and offensive, Anastasia delayed her father's intention for a short space. But when she found that he would call help and force an entrance, she flung wide the door with words of indignation and scornful reproach.

He had his riding-whip in his hand, and he let it fall with pitiless weight upon her shoulders. It was a common discipline for the high-tempered dames of those days, and Anastasia took half a dozen strokes without any apparent sense of wrong or insult. Suddenly, however, she turned, and with a swift and unexpected movement snatched the whip from his hand and flung it beneath her feet. Her face blazed, her eyes defied him, she extended her arm and cried out in a tone impossible to contradict:

"Stand off, sir! That is sufficient for my disobedience! I have committed no other fault."

"Show me the company you had, and I will believe you. Here hath been too much whispering about it. If 't was not Captain Bell —"

"Captain Bellingham! Sir, I am your child, and faith! the De Burgs fall not to petty vices. The Devil honours us all with great affairs." She dropped him a

mocking courtesy with the words, and moved him to speechless anger by that untranslatable defiance which radiates from an indignant and wrathful woman.

He did not answer her specially, but went muttering about the room, throwing open awmries and closets, and accompanying the act with a storm of abusive and suspicious words. Then he passed into the rooms beyond, and Anastasia opened the window, cast the whip into the garden, and then stood waiting for the blast of fury she knew would soon follow.

There had been no time to obliterate in John's room the traces of its occupancy. His pipe lay upon a table, and beside it there were still the remains of meat and wine. De Burg became suddenly silent when he saw them, and a feeling almost of satisfaction blended with his passion. He had been right, then. His anger was just, it needed no longer to grope about in a blind rage seeking its object. He called Anastasia in a vaunting, strenuous voice, and she answered the summons at once.

He pointed to the pipe, the food, and the bottle, and she looked at them with the calm indifference with which we regard familiar and expected objects.

"I swear, I swear, Mistress, I will blush for you, since you blush not for your own shame! Lord! What have you to say now?"

"For your sake, sir, I say nothing at present."

"I bless myself at my patience! God in heaven! I'll find a way to make you say something. Name the villain, that I may spit him on my sword to the hilt-basket. Speak!"

"I have nothing to say."

For the moment he was unable to answer, but he went back to Anastasia's room and began to search the floor in a furious hurry. She understood his motive and

said calmly, "If you are looking for your riding-whip, it is as far beyond your reach as it ought to be beyond your desire. Be reasonable, sir; then I will give you the satisfaction you cannot get from me with any amount of dog-treatment. This also is an affair for ourselves; why breed a story about it? Do you wish all the footmen and serving-maids in the county to gape over us?"

There was something in her manner which shocked him into a dazed, reluctant kind of reasonableness. Her face expressed anxiety, but not even the shadow of shame. She stood a little distance from him, silent and hesitating, for she was trying to put off her confession in order to gain every moment possible for her flying brother. The voiceless tension was soon irritating to De Burg. "This silence is a mummery," he said. "You were ever too ready to speak. Whom have you been entertaining so near to your own room?"

"One of our own name."

She let the words drop slowly, watching her father's face as she did so. It terrified her.

"You lie!"

"No, sir."

"Name him, if you dare."

"Your son, John de Burg."

"You lie tenfold! I have no son."

"My brother, John de Burg."

"The curse of God and man! How dared you bring him under my roof?" And he threw her from him with a force that would have felled a frailer woman. Anastasia reeled, but recovered herself quickly.

"It is the truth. I would have saved you the truth if you had trusted me. John, as you well know, has been hunted off the sea. He came to the home earth, and for your sake I hid him. 'T was a strange hazard, and

I do not deserve to be struck for carrying it out with so much bravery. All considered, can there be anything more absurd than that you should play Brutus in your own house? Plenty of ghosts wander about these rooms at midnight, wringing helpless hands. John in the flesh is manageable, but I would not have you the one to set his soul free of it. Nor had I a mind that our affairs should breed tittle-tattle among neighbours; so I lent him my mare, and gone he is."

"Where?"

"To sea. His ship was waiting off Barrow for him. Say what you will, you cannot but know that I have acted with a wisdom beyond yourself. Sir, go not away in such haste and distraction. 'Tis beyond your power to come up with him, and why then set the country howling the name of De Burg to curses?"

"There is no curse too deep for him."

"Some also might say that it was a strange thing if John de Burg was so long under your roof without your connivance; and you are not without enemies who would make the most of the doubt."

De Burg listened to her with blazing eyes and a sullenly thoughtful face. There are generally circumstances surrounding every wrong which make it difficult or imprudent for the injured either to avenge or to right themselves. De Burg had been brought to a point which permitted him to take these into consideration, and Anastasia wisely left him to that employment. She occupied herself in putting straight the contents of a drawer; and while his mind was revolving words and deeds which could suggest nothing but the highway gibbet or the avenging knife, his eyes were curiously noting her long white fingers as they folded a pink ribbon or slowly crimped a bit of English point.

At length he saw her take a lawn kerchief and fold it for a covering for her neck. The act reproached him, and he furtively lifted his eyes and saw the marks of his passion across her white shoulders. It was not a pleasant sight, so he moved in a slow, stupid way toward the door, muttering, "Where there are women there are all kinds of mischiefs ;" but after having closed the door he re-opened it and bade her come down quickly and play a game of draughts with him. He was afraid of his own thoughts, and the large, empty rooms, turning shabby in the years of trouble in which nothing had been renewed, were indeed haunted even in the sunny midday with ghostly memories he could not endure to entertain.

It was at this same hour that Nathaniel was leaving Sandys as the protector of John Whitehead. Half way to Kendal the party saw John de Burg, a little off the main road, riding like a man who rides to outrun disaster. The constables both turned to watch him ; and Nathaniel also observed the mad hurry of the rider, the head bent to the neck of the animal, the cloak streaming out behind. The sight, after all, was only a natural one ; but nothing in life deserves more attention than the things we call natural, since it is by the most natural doors that trouble enters.

As for John de Burg, he paid no attention to the party. It was not pursuing him, and his mind was wholly set upon reaching Sandys before his father could take any determined steps against him. At the park gates he dismissed the mare and made at once for the coverts of undergrowth, and thus he gradually advanced to the house. In the interval he recovered his usual cool assurance ; and when the park became a garden, he was prepared to meet any one wandering in its shade.

The sight of a white hood gave him pleasure. He

rightly divined that the wearer was Olivia Prideaux, and he contrived to meet her in a narrow walk bordered by hedges of privet. There he threw himself at her feet with an impetuous fear and a pretence of exhaustion which startled and alarmed the girl.

“Mistress Prideaux, have pity on me!” he cried. “My life is in your hands. Be so merciful as to care for it a little.”

“I know thee not; but if thee is in trouble—”

“I am Harald Sandys. I have been to Penrith on the king’s business, and am like to be run down by the king’s enemies. I have come to the old home for shelter. I know not where else to go.”

She looked with pity on the kneeling man, and touching his hand said, “Rise! Thou must not kneel to any mortal, and I think thou hast a right to shelter here. My father is at Ulverstone; but until he returns I will do his duty for him. Walk by my side. I am glad thou art yet alive. It was said, and fully believed, that no Sandys escaped the sword.”

“Indeed, Mistress, I was sorely wounded at Marston, where my noble cousin fell; but I was nursed and sheltered, and so I escaped to the king, in whose service I spend my poor life.”

There was no further conversation. She walked directly to the house, and John de Burg walked at her side. He felt that he had said sufficient, and that he could be silent and know that silence would be to his advantage; but he watched with a furtive delight the beautiful face at his side. Wicked as he was, he felt the purity of his companion, and he looked at the innocent girl with something of the same pleasure which a botanist feels when he suddenly discovers a wondrous flower unknown to him before.

Asa Bevin met them in the front hall, and looked with little favour on the dusty, disordered cavalier. Perhaps Olivia noticed the man's expression, for she said with a decided purpose and authority: "A neighbour in trouble, Asa. Thou wilt see that he has all things necessary for his comfort. Until my father comes home he is in thy care, and there is no other to know of his presence here."

Then she removed her hood, and sat down to consider what she had done; but it was difficult even for her well-trained mind to follow out one train of thought. Nathaniel's looks and words, and his espousal of John Whitehead's case, would blend with the circumstances of this last most unlooked-for visitor. Asa's evident disapproval of him also annoyed her.

"Thou must judge with a fair mind, Asa," she said in reply to a very doubtful speech; "and thou must not let thy prejudices hinder thy kindness. I trust that Charles Stuart hath some good men in his service."

"Olivia, we have neither this nor that to do with Charles Stuart. Thou shouldst have waited for counsel and clearness in such a weighty matter."

"The man had his life in his hand. If our enemy hunger, we are told to feed him."

"If friend or enemy hath a crime against him, we are not told to prevent justice. And Friends are concerned to testify against mixing up with the world's people. This man hath their likeness and likelihood. I have not felt drawn toward him."

"To-morrow morning my father will be home. He will doubtless be given to see his duty. Until then let the stranger be in thy charge."

"Truly I will. I think not of trusting him; for I have been counselled by that which never failed me."

"Be not over-suspicious, Asa. The shadow of divine mercy is exceeding broad."

She sat down in it, and lost herself in the sweetness and peace of its consolation. Was it not sufficient for all the sure anxieties of the present, and also for those which lurked in the obscurity of the future? A great calm fell upon her soul. She was at rest in the Lord, and they who ascend that height have all things under their feet.

It was near noon on the following day when Roger returned from Ulverstone. There had been a memorable meeting there. The very room had been shaken by the power of God, and from the awful glory of that experience many had risen to give themselves and all they had to the preaching of the indwelling Christ. The light and comfort of the Holy Ghost was with Roger, its reflection on his face, and his favourite hymn singing through his heart: —

“Oh, be glad, thou Zion’s daughter,
 Joyous news to thee are sent;
 Thou shalt sing a strain of sweetness,
 Sing it to thy heart’s content.
 Now the friend of God thou art,
 Therefore shalt thou joy at heart,
 Therefore know no sorrow smart.”¹

At that hour the gift of life, with God and eternity to bless and crown it, seemed a very precious gift to him.

The news of John Whitehead’s arrest and of Nathaniel’s sympathy did not darken his happy mood. He almost envied the youths their opportunity for “testifying.” But when Olivia spoke of the hidden guest waiting to see him, Roger was troubled. For men with God to strengthen them may face martyrdom smiling, and the same men shrink and tremble before a financial crisis which is to be a question for quibbling lawyers and prejudiced judges.

¹ Old German mystical hymn.

The first mention of Harald Sandys raised in Roger's mind a grave and troublous question. Would this Harald be heir-at-law? Would his own purchase of Sandys be void? Would his tenure of the house be in the discretion of this young man? He asked many particulars of Olivia and of Asa, and was not comforted by any report received.

It was just at this hour that Nathaniel called with his account of the proceedings in John Whitehead's case. He saw plainly that Roger was not himself; and as he could not imagine the true reason of his mental disturbance, he followed the usual course of men and women, and began to consider what *he* had said or done to induce the constrained courtesy, and to make himself unhappy over it.

He arrived at Kelderby in that mood which above all things asks for sympathy. And it so happened that he had just overstayed the moment in which sympathy still waited for him. Lady Kelder had been impatiently expecting her son for thirty hours. During at least twenty-nine of them she had waited for him with that alternating pleasure and wonder which is ready to accord with whatever mood asks fellow-feeling. But the strain had been a little too long; she had begun to feel injured, neglected, and of small account. As she drove her wheel round she told herself, and sometimes told the baron, who sat reading opposite her, that she was very silly to expect consideration when Anastasia was her rival. And the baron, hearing her voice only as discords through the measures of—

“Sydneian showers
Of sweet discourse,”

answered vaguely what he thought likewise; and so mended nothing wrong, but rather made sense of neglect worse.

It was raining heavily yet, and the black, drizzling crags, the tilled fields swept by the wet wind, the grass black with shadows, the heights coiled with gray, ghostly vapours, — everything around insensibly subdued the mind to a settled melancholy quiet. It was such a day as breeds worries, even if they do not exist; and Lady Kelder, having waited with unused sympathy all the morning, felt now as if nothing could induce her to give what had been so long neglected. Her hour for waiting to be gracious was past, and she looked up at Nathaniel when he entered with an indifference which he felt it difficult to contend with.

The baron put down his book and said, with some effort of enthusiasm, "Glad to see you, Nathaniel! Let me tell you your mother and I have taken your delay very ill, and with rather small patience."

"'T was against my will, sir."

"Fie, Nathaniel! When a man is so passionately taken with a gentlewoman as you are with Anastasia de Burg, his will is a very spider-web for her to break."

"My dear mother, I left Anastasia within three hours after our meeting. This, on my conscience!"

"Nathaniel, what said my Cousin Stephen to your news?"

"Indeed, sir, I think he took it with light gratitude. He was for the hills, and did not wait to speak his mind; nor did I wait to hear it at his convenience."

"I lost my hopes of any good out of Stephen de Burg long ago," said Lady Kelder. "Where there is no grace, how can there be gratitude? Pray, how does Mistress de Burg endure what she mockingly calls 'the reign of the saints'?"

"She was not in a complaining humour. I found her engaged in a game of battledore with Captain Bellingham and Squire Chenage."

“And dressed like a May queen, or a picture of Mr. Lely’s, without doubt.”

“Indeed, Mother, I remember not in particulars. She was in a glow of pink ribbons, and extremely handsome.”

“And mincing and stepping with a delicate grace like King Agag, I’ll warrant her. And giving you such refuse of her smiles as Squire Chenage and Captain Bellingham could not miss. She had ever that kind of trick with you.”

“Mother, you wrong me as much as you wrong the lady. And you are enough in my heart to know that I would humour no such beggarly grace.”

“Come, Nathaniel, here is food; and I make no doubt you need it. While you eat you shall give us the rest of your adventures. Good meat and drink never yet spoiled a tale. If you left De Burg ere sunset, where spent you the night?”

“Baron, what need to ask? He spent it at Sandys, of course. Little wit is needed for that riddle.”

“Indeed, Mother, you have guessed to a miracle. I was at Sandys. There I found also many ladies and gentlemen of good degree; also your favoured minister, John Duttred.”

“John Duttred! If what you say, Nathaniel, be of your own knowledge, I will believe it; if you saw him not, I scarce know how to do so.”

“What could take the minister to the Quakers’?” asked the baron, curiously.

“To talk with one of whom all men may learn somewhat. George Fox was there, and Duttred had some disputing with him.”

“A waste of time and testimony,” said Lady Kelder. “George Fox listens only to himself.”

“What thought you of him?”

“I think, Father, that he is such an one as God uses to shake the souls of men. I can but wonder that he sent at one time Fox and Cromwell. Surely England has been exalted to the skies by such favour.”

“I am amazed at you, Nathaniel. 'T is nothing but an insult to the Protector to set him in the same sentence with a Quaker. And he would not forgive you very quickly for it.”

“Mother, if you will allow me to repeat to you what George Fox said, you must needs see how much of prejudice there is in your misliking.”

“I thank God I have no itching ear for strange doctrine; ‘plain blasphemy’ Master Duttred calls Quakerism. And if you will talk of it, 't will be in my absence. I have no senses for such people, — no eyes to see them, no ears to hear them, no tongue to talk of them; no, truly, though it were of that pattern of all virtues, Mistress Olivia Prideaux!”

With the words she rose up in a passion from her wheel, and said many things too positive to be reasonable. For the finest ladies, then as now, caught the spirit of their age, and Lady Kelder thought she did well to stand by the faith in which she had trusted from her childhood; and it cannot be denied that, being in a fit of bad temper, she was not sorry to find a point of conscience to excuse it.

“You, Nathaniel Kelder!” she cried passionately. “You! you, who are of the blood of the martyrs! *You* speaking for the Quakers is a thing not to be endured! Were your fore-elders, who died in the fires of Smithfield and perished in the cells of Newgate for their testimony to God’s truth, under a delusion? Was my father, hunted to death on these hills for Non-conformity, deceived by

his own imaginations? No, sir! And if they were in the right, then these Quakers are scandalously and abominably and blasphemously in the wrong. And as for the Protector, I blame him every hour and every minute for suffering them in the land at all."

She delivered this opinion with all the vehemence of a soul-conviction, and as neither her husband nor her son felt disposed to continue a defence not as yet definite in their own minds, Lady Kelder left the room with the private assurance that her words had touched the deepest feelings of both men, and had been felt to be unanswerable.

Then there was a few minutes of that uncomfortable silence of indecision which relieves itself either by motion or by gloomy intentness. Nathaniel walked about the room, the baron sat gazing into the leaping flames on the hearth; Jael came in and removed the dishes, and put by her lady's wheel, and potted about the fire and the furniture until the very air of the room was irritable, but when left alone father and son were both ready to talk.

Naturally the De Burgs opened the conversation, and it turned at once to John de Burg and the proposal which had been made by Anastasia. "I acted, sir, without your advice, and I may have been in too great a passion of honour and honesty. John was born wicked. It seemeth to me that he hath inherited all the sinful tendencies of all the De Burgs before him. Perchance this ought to have been considered."

"I observe not in Scripture any special tolerance for such men, neither in nature do we make excuses for inherited evil tendencies. The dog too brutal for control is mercilessly slain. We put our foot upon the head of the adder. In foreign countries the tiger and the great serpent are not forgiven the consequences of their devilish

desires because they are natural to them. And John de Burg was born under the chime of church bells, with the words of prophets and apostles in his ears; he knew the Name which would compel the seven devils within him to tremble and fly, and he never spoke it. This is most sure, or he had cleansed his soul with the good handsel of that name. You spoke well for me. My roof shall not shelter nor my bread feed him."

"If, indeed, he was truly sorry?"

"He would deliver himself to justice and pay the penalty of his crimes. His father, though a thorough malignant, hath so much of virtue and honour as to abhor the son who has linked his name with deeds conceived in devilish cruelty and wrought out with the cunning and treachery of a wild beast."

Now often when the heart is full of turmoil, restlessness, and anger, conversation about a wicked person acts as a salutary medicine. As the two men spoke of John de Burg it was as if the evil name drew to itself all that was evil or irritable in them. Gradually they spoke with less fret, until the mention of Roger Prideaux opened a holy and wonderful subject. In it they became more and more interested and in earnest; and anon the conversation was full of eloquent pauses and ellipses. Their voices grew low and solemn. In each other's eyes they caught meanings beyond words. The fire burned down to red ash, and they heeded it not; the evening shadows grew long and dim; they sat stiller and stiller in them, for the warmth of the hidden fire was in their hearts, and the glow of the inward light around them.

V.

ANASTASIA AND OLIVIA.

“With how secure a brow and specious form
He gilds the secret villain !
. sets his countenance for deceit,
And promises a lie before he speaks.”

“Heaven has no rage like love to hatred turned,
Nor hell a fury like a woman scorned.”

“My heavy heart, the prophetess of woe,
Forebodes some ill at hand.”

IT is not necessary that we run glittering like a brook in the open sunshine in order to be happy, yet every heart seeks some flower of pleasure with which to adorn its daily duty ; even as the wealthy wheatfield wears with the bending corn the useless, splendid poppy. Nathaniel had many important things to attend to during the week ensuing his visit to Kendal, for the oversight of the estate was on him, — and there was wood-cutting in the forest, and there were folds upon the hills, and the farm servants and the fishers and the shrimp-gatherers all waited for his orders. But though these duties brought him a sure satisfaction, he thought very often of Olivia, and the memory of her voice was like some one calling him wherever he went ; and he longed, even in his busiest hours, for the sight of her face, and for that nearness of her presence which was in itself a simple delight.

Sometimes the baron rode or walked with him ; and the two men meeting a solitary shepherd on the hills, or

a fisher tugging his boat on to the shingle, or a silent man driving the plough before him, they would stop and talk awhile: first of the work going on, but sure finally to drift to the subjects uppermost in every heart, — life and death and the conditions pertaining to them; how “man that is born of a woman is of few days, and full of trouble,” and how he can be justified with God.

These thoughts, which the ancient Chaldean pondered under the stars of the desert, and which survive all changes of race, manners, and dynasty, had at that day in England a tremendous vitality. The Bible in the vulgar tongue was as yet a new book. Men and women loved it and trusted in it with a passionate sincerity which it is hard for us to understand, who use it as a schoolbook, and make anagrams and puzzles out of it for the amusement column of the weekly newspaper. Every word between its covers was the word of God. No one doubted a tittle of it. It was read upon the knees. It was never touched but with clean hands. Upon its stand or table no other thing was permitted a place. In the household and the church it was the holy of holies. Men then really did sell a field and buy this pearl of price. And they were not content to read; they searched the Scriptures for hid treasure, and they found it.

And as God is his own interpreter to every man, and to no two men alike, no wonder that it was an age of spiritual conversation and discussion. Even on Kelder's estate he found the great truths, which all acknowledged, tinged by a variety of individualities. The shepherds had aërial visions, the husbandmen strong and stern convictions, the dwellers by the sea believed in supernatural forms of sight and hearing; but with all of them Nathaniel had strong sympathies. The Bethlehem shepherds, watching their flocks by night, had seen a vision

of angels ; he knew no reason why Westmoreland shepherds should not be equally blessed. He could understand how these grave men, even when fighting the battles of the Lord, had pined for the upper pastures with their long twilights, and their wide view and their free life.

Several of the farmers had been soldiers in Cromwell's army, and to obey God's will and do duty to its last particle was their ideal of righteousness ; special tokens of love, particular help or visitations, they looked not for. The "well done" of the Master at the close of their labour was sufficient. In such strong self-abnegation Nathaniel grew in spiritual stature ; and there were times when even the melancholy mysteries of the coastmen fitted into his mood. He could feel with them the harbinger of death going overhead, and see and hear in their dubious, dreamlike intimations as men do and see and hear who go down to the sea in ships and see God's wonders in the great deep.

One morning, more than a week after this eventful journey, Nathaniel was sitting with the baron upon a large boulder overlooking a great extent of country. Suddenly he had an impression that he ought to go to Sandys. The desire to do so had been with him all the week ; but he had felt hurt at Roger's constrained manner, and an honest haughtiness of self-esteem, not to be blamed, had hitherto prevented him from humouring his inclinations.

"Father," he said, "I feel that I must go to Sandys. It appears to me that I have no time for delay."

"Consider whether the feeling be of desire or of duty."

"There are commands which I have no right to consider. This is one of them."

He rose as he said the words and began to unfasten

his horse and arrange the bridle. The baron rose with him. The calm induced by their previous conversation was all gone; he looked anxious, and in a wistful, warning voice said, "Before you mount look to the girth."

The words had a much deeper intent, and Nathaniel caught it and nodded a grave assurance in reply. Then he rode away with the hurry of a man who is sent as a swift messenger, and the baron led his own horse down the green, slippery sheep-path; and somehow, for the dim turmoil of his uncertain feelings, he could find no ejaculation but one, "Oh, the changing years! Oh, the changing years!" And though to others the words would have been unintelligible, to Odinel Kelder they were the sum of a life full of vivid emotions and stirring deeds.

Nathaniel reached Sandys in the afternoon. He had been detained a little by a tide-swollen stream, and had lost some of that enthusiasm of conviction which had hurried him at his first setting out. Roger Prideaux was not at home; he had gone to neighbour Gill's, Asa said, but might be back at any hour. Now, Nathaniel was a great favourite with Asa, and he had the utmost reliance upon his heart and judgment. He knew, quite as well as if Nathaniel had told him so, that the young man loved Olivia; and he favoured the idea of such a marriage. For he thought Olivia too self-reliant and too authoritative for her sex, and expected her to find in Nathaniel's strong character and will a force sufficient to make her obedient to him. Indeed, the only point in which Asa considered Quakerism vulnerable to mortal criticism was its acknowledgment of the spiritual equality of men and women. Asa was willing that God should speak to women, but he was not willing that women should be in any respect God's messengers to his own sex.

He had been much struck with Nathaniel's determination and authority in the case of John Whitehead. He felt sure that he was exactly suited to keep Olivia in that gentle but positive subjection which he thought was not only the natural but the wisest state for women. So, though he had been told by Roger to admit no one into the house during his absence, he made bold to read the order in the light of his own judgment, and to give Nathaniel the opportunity for a little private conversation with Olivia.

"Friend Roger is gone to neighbour Gill's, but thou canst talk with Olivia; and if thou hast anything to say, say it quickly. I am thy friend in this matter, for I have turned the fleece on both sides. Now, therefore, if thy mind is made up, seasonably insist upon it."

Nathaniel did not receive this advice as kindly as its interest warranted. Olivia was so set apart in his own mind that he could not endure that others should speculate about her affairs or her future, especially where that future touched a subject so personal as his love for her. He answered Asa's advice by asking precisely the same question he would have asked had the advice not been given: "Is Mistress Prideaux within the house?" Asa was "led to think so;" but about women and their ways he never ventured on any statement more positive.

Nathaniel went at once to the dining-room. He opened the door with the quick, decided movement natural to all his actions. Olivia sat in a chair by the window. John de Burg sat near her. He had a book in his hand and was reading aloud. In a moment the scene changed. Olivia came a step forward to meet him, and John de Burg rose and laid the volume upon Olivia's work-table. Her face was suffused with blushes, her manner confiding and yet deprecatory.

“Nathaniel, thou art welcome. This is Harald Sandys, the cousin of thy friend who died at Marston Moor. He was mercifully spared, and, being in danger, has been led to select the old home as a good place of safety. Nathaniel, from thee he has nothing to fear, I know.”

John bowed so profoundly as to suggest a defiance or an impertinence. The eyes of the two men met, and, swift as the firing of a gun, the pupils of both dilated with anger. Nathaniel's flashed with a blue flame, and the blood rushed crimson over his face and brow. For it was a glance of recognition to him. He was sure that he saw John de Burg, and he knew why he had been sent to Sandys.

John was the only person at ease in the situation. He lifted a volume of George Herbert and began to read stray lines and couplets from it, and to invite Olivia to comment upon them: —

“Dare to be true: nothing can need a lie;
A fault, which needs it most, grows two thereby.”

John found an illustration of this dictum in his own experience. He made Olivia confess that it had been better for him as Harald Sandys than it would have been had he assumed another name. He kept to this subject with a persistence which drove Nathaniel to the verge of passionately assailing his identity; for in the few minutes' observation of his face while speaking, Nathaniel's insight had changed suspicion into certainty.

The fine profile of almost savage intensity was the De Burg profile, exaggerated by John's especially wicked character. The eyes sombre, tawny in colour, cold and sinister in expression, moved in the same bluish opal that made Anastasia's soft orbs so remarkable. He carried his head high, with the same domineering look which

distinguished all the De Burgs. He had also their full, abrupt voice; but the cool stare, blushless as that of a bull, was doubtless a quality which he owed entirely to his own shameless cultivation of it.

The desultory reading and conversation went on for about ten minutes, during which time Nathaniel was observing and deciding. Suddenly into the strained, suspicious atmosphere came the sound of a shrill, gay voice, the tapping of light heels upon the stone passage, the swish and rustle of trailing silk garments. Olivia stood up pale and discomposed, while a quick intelligence as to the interruption flashed into John de Burg's face. This circumstance was instantly noted by Nathaniel; so that the final confirmation of Anastasia's entrance was scarcely needed by him. She advanced trippingly, with the prettiest courtesy and the brightest smiles.

"Mistress Prideaux, I am hugely pleased to see you. Faith, I thought I never would come at you! There is a stupid old man at your door who would have denied me entrance at all points, had I let him. Captain Kelder, you look yourself to a miracle. Pray, do you ever mean to smile again?"

She had taken Olivia's hand, and was gazing into the girl's face with all the inquisitive mockery of her nature; but by this time Olivia was quite composed. It had taken her but a moment to reflect that Harald Sandys could be in no political danger from Mistress de Burg; and she said with a grave, sweet manner, "Doubtless Harald Sandys is known to thee. We have been favoured to give him help in trouble."

"All who suffer for the king are known to me," answered Anastasia; and she gave her hand to her brother with a face full of conflicting feeling, though Nathaniel perceived that the humour of the situation was predomi-

nant, and that the girl had much to do to prevent herself turning it into an occasion for mirth. A glance from her brother brought her to reason, and with the utmost manner of a fine lady, she said, —

“I am but a bad neighbour, Mistress Prideaux, and you have good reason to be rude to me now, but to say truth, I have been hindered from coming a score of times; for I assure you that I have not fallen out with all the world because the Lord Protector and my Cousin Kelder cannot agree with me. Yet truly” — and she looked at Nathaniel with eyes full of reproachful sadness — “I have been tempted to fly from so many unkind circumstances. ’T is said the king hath ever a welcome for a merry heart, and I hear there is a ship lying off this coast for some who will take refuge with him.”

This last piece of information was given with a meaning glance at her brother, and Nathaniel instantly understood why Olivia had received a visit from Mistress de Burg. John’s ship was waiting for him, and she had come to give him the information. Having done so she turned the conversation with a rapid and graceful adroitness upon the weather and the flowers and the gentlewoman whom she was going to visit as she passed through Milnthorpe. Her name again brought up that of the king; and John, either carelessly or as a matter of defiance, spoke of the Protector as “Old Noll.”

The very atmosphere of the room was tingling and provocative. John, in the sense of the security afforded by the near presence of his ship, assumed an attitude indescribably irritating. Anastasia’s conversation was full of covert innuendoes, thinly veiled by an almost offensive politeness. Nathaniel’s face showed that he had made his last concession to the social courtesies the situation

demanded. Then Olivia, whose repose of manner and low voice had been in singular contrast to the restless, irritable spirit of her visitors, rose, and saying something about "refreshments," left the room. For eating and drinking together has ever been the English fetish for averting quarrels, or for their reconciliation.

As she closed the door John and his sister went toward an open window ; but Nathaniel, who was radiating anger as a lamp radiates light, could restrain himself no longer.

"John de Burg," he said, "go at this moment, or I will arrest you in the name of the Commonwealth."

"My excellent cousin, John is *now* ready to go. The pretty Quakeress has served his turn." It was Anastasia who spoke, facing him suddenly with her sweeping courtesy and her scornful smile. Her brother's countenance was an epitome of every evil passion, and he instantly supplemented his sister's words with the remark, —

"I am going on my own orders, not on yours."

He was counting some gold as he spoke ; and as he put it in his pouch he glared at Nathaniel with an impudent and rancorous leer, and added, "I am in your debt, Cousin Kelder. I will pay you. I will pay you well. By every devil in hell, I swear it !"

Nathaniel's hand was on his sword ; he was in the act of advancing, when John by a rapid leap through the window evaded the intended arrest. Anastasia instantly placed herself in the way. She was the incarnation of rage, and through her set teeth she hissed at him the first contemptuous words which came to the relief of her passion. They were too unwomanly to be answered, and Nathaniel heard them with profound shame and sadness. They ended, as such words generally do, in a threat, —

“John will pay you, sir, for these two minutes; and I will help him.”

“Anastasia, you will do as you desire in the future. At this moment you will do as I desire; that is, you will leave Sandys at once. You have shamefully wronged its kindness and goodness. Make your adieus when Mistress Prideaux comes in. You shall not eat and drink with her. You are unworthy to be in her presence.”

“The sweet saint! So that is the way the wind blows, is it?”

He did not answer her; and she continued her passionate tirade, making both her face and her body partners with her tongue in the expression of her contempt and hatred.

“The canting little Quakeress!” with a snap of her long white fingers. “I am to do her honour and homage, am I?” with a scornful courtesy to the words.

“Only make your respects to her as quickly as possible.”

“Faith, sir! I will make no respects to her. Too much grace for the simpering ‘thee’ and ‘thou’;” and with the contempt of the words defacing and darkening her beautiful face, she passionately flung open the door and left him.

The temper of her departure she cared not to hide; and amid the hurry and clatter of carriage doors and carriage horses it was easy to distinguish the imperious tones of her shrill, clear voice.

In the height of the turmoil Olivia returned to the room. She had in her hands a small silver tray holding a seed-cake and some cowslip wine. Her plain black dress and the snowy purity of its deep lawn cuffs and neckerchief accentuated the slight flush upon her cheeks. Her clear eyes were troubled; her gentle manner had

lost something of its serene repose. She looked at Nathaniel curiously, and then noticed that he was alone.

"It seemeth as if something was wrong. Was it indeed Mistress de Burg who left in such anger? Where is Harald Sandys? Surely thou hast not been quarrelling with them, Nathaniel?"

"The man who was here is not fit for your presence. I have sent him away."

"Thou art angry, and thou art going too far. My father's wisdom passeth for a general report, and he thinketh well of the young man."

"But I know him to be only evil."

"We are forbidden to judge, and Harald Sandys —"

"He is not Harald Sandys; he is the brother of Mistress de Burg."

"John de Burg?"

She could hardly ask the question, and Nathaniel answered her only by a movement of affirmation. The horror of the girl was unmistakable, though she sat down and remained for some moments motionless. It was evident John de Burg's history was known to her, and indeed Nathaniel had little to add in explanation of his conduct. For, knowing all, Olivia saw at once that it was the only possible course; and she was the first to speak of what had hitherto escaped Nathaniel's notice, — the possibility of her father getting into trouble with the Government for sheltering its outlaw.

"My father did it willingly; for nine days he has sheltered him. He also asked from Edward D'Acre a change of clothing for him. Oh, Nathaniel! my heart misgives me sorely."

Nathaniel looked at the sorrowful girl, and his heart ached to comfort her. Words of affection sprang to his lips; but he would not, at their first outflow, mingle

them with words of fear and wrong. Besides, he saw that Olivia was inclined to silence. She was waiting for a greater Comforter and Counsellor than himself. So he went away from Sandys soon after Anastasia, and rode slowly toward his home by the road on which he expected to meet Roger Prideaux.

He was very much disturbed and depressed; apprehensions came in crowds, and the low, melancholy tones of the bleating flocks seemed to voice them. He met Roger about five miles from Sandys. His broad face, shrewd and homely, had not its usual benignity; indeed, it had the expression of a man who had worries of his own. Nathaniel told him plainly whom he had been entertaining, and the manner in which he had rid him of his guest. The news startled and troubled Roger; yet it was not altogether bad, for he confessed that he had been anxious about the man's right to Sandys, and had entered into an obligation to buy that right for a sum of ready money. And he had just been to a wealthy neighbour's to obtain a temporary loan for the purpose, as the claimant, he said, had become uneasy to get forward on the king's business.

"It is most certain, Roger, that your guest was John de Burg; and that after trespassing upon your home, he intended to rob you of your money. I have no doubt he fell a-laughing at you a dozen times a day."

"God forgive him!"

"I would at once convey to the proper officers all particulars of this affair. I fear, otherwise, that it may be made an occasion against you."

"What time hath passed since the man left Sandys?"

"About two hours."

"Then he is manifestly beyond arrest. I doubt not there was a small boat waiting at the nearest point for

him. He is on his own ship by this time. I will seek after counsel and clearness before I speak abroad of the matter."

"It is such a matter as may be severely dealt with."

"It is indeed a weighty and perplexing dispensation; but I trust that I shall be given to see the right way. Whom dost thou fear? Speak plainly."

"Mistress de Burg."

Roger smiled dubiously. "She hath her own plans; they touch not me or mine, I think. And I have proved that the strength of silence is greater than the strength of speech."

Then they parted; Nathaniel full of a vague trouble, yet in sacerdotal sympathy with all around him. The soft gray afternoon was fast merging into a dull red on the horizon, the hedgerows were growing indistinct, the wider landscape was a dim outline of light and shadow. Soon the vapours rolling down the valleys made the lonely scene more lonesome. The events of the day fitted themselves into it; the singular impression which sent him to Sandys, John de Burg's threat of injury, Anastasia's words of scorn and hate, — all grew remote and indistinct as the natural world around him; while the dull heavy sound of the sea, its confused tones, its sighing surges, seemed the indistinct utterance of his own unutterable emotions. And as he approached Kelderby the moon rose, and in its light he was conscious of a strange backward prescience, a mysterious memory of some existence where the sandy shores were longer, and the hills far higher, and the sense of life more sweet and strong.

It was strange that amid all these thoughts Olivia had no distinct pre-eminence; for the soul is not always on its watch-tower, — it has periods of carelessness, for which

it often sorrows with a hopeless regret. And no intimation of what followed on his leaving Sandys troubled Nathaniel. He had seen the departure of John and Anastasia de Burg, and it never entered his mind that either of them would return. But he knew nothing of the nature of a woman like Anastasia. Before she had quite reached Milnthorpe the Devil whispered a few words in her heart which turned the tempest of her passion into a sudden calm.

"Why not?" she asked. "Why not? If he is still there, I will confront them both. I will claim his hand, and vow I had his promise. The little saint will be so much of a woman as to believe me. If he is not there, I can say whatever pleaseth me. Yes, I will grant myself this gratification. I can rest all night at Milnthorpe with Mistress Cecil. Faith, I will not go back to De Burg owing myself so much."

Instantly she turned the carriage back to Sandys. Fortunately, Olivia saw her approach while she was yet at some distance, and her well-trained mind instantly began to subdue itself to a settled calm and purpose. Anastasia fully expected to find her in tears and distraction, for she reasoned thus: "If Nathaniel has delivered her so much of my affairs as to explain that Harald Sandys is John de Burg, she will be weeping out her horror to him. If he has not told her, they have probably quarrelled on the secrecy of the affair. Do Quakers quarrel? 'T is a point of indifference; for if she speech not her anger, it will nest in her heart and breed more and worse."

Asa Bevin met her at the door with a doubly forbidding aspect. But his deliberate speech and manner was no impediment to the resolute woman. She had passed him before his first words of remonstrance were

uttered, and again Olivia heard her rapid tread upon the flagged passage, and again saw her enter the room in a still more exaggerated flurry of rustling silk and flying ribbons.

She was dashed by its perfect stillness and order. The wine and cake had been removed. Every chair was in its place. Olivia sat with her hands dropped on her lap, gazing out of the window. She rose courteously as Anastasia approached, but with an air of reserve, and waited for her visitor to address her.

“Mistress Prideaux, I left in something of a hurry; for, to say truth, Captain Kelder roused in me more temper than I usually carry about. To speak plainly, you must know that he hath the promise of my hand, — a promise which lately he values too little. I am advised that *you* are the excuse for his unkindness.”

“I am sorry thou thinkest so unworthily of him, and of me. I have given thee no reason.”

“Marry! I believe you not. Captain Kelder is such a man as would be beyond the nay-say of a girl of your breeding and condition.”

“My breeding teaches me to take no man into my thoughts until he has sought them with honour.”

“That is beyond Captain Kelder. He is already promised.”

“And my condition is one that may ask civility, even from thee.”

“I tell you plainly that Captain Kelder is bound to me. You have no right to entertain him.”

“Thou art going too far. Thou must keep to thy own rights.”

“I will take no correction from you.”

“But thou must in this matter. My father’s guests are to be entertained by me.”

“Captain Kelder is a liar and a villain. You ought to give me credit for the warning. I’ll swear I cried for you when I saw him here.”

“I am sorry thou hast such evil thoughts. And if Nathaniel Kelder hath been false to thee, then truly it is best to weep for thyself.”

“Oh, you cunning Quaker wench! Faith, but you are, clever in bandying words!”

Olivia turned slightly from her but did not speak.

“Answer me!”

“I am forbidden to give railing for railing.”

“Day of the Devil! You shall answer me!”

“I will have no quarrel with thee. Be pleased to remove thyself from my presence.”

So far both had remained standing. Olivia now returned to her chair. Anastasia made an attempt to follow her example, but the impetuosity of her passion would not brook the constraint of the posture. She stood, she walked, she stood again before the girl she was torturing, feeling a certain dominance in the attitude which increased her insolence.

“I will go anon, — when I am ready. Do you know that you are in my power, — under my feet? For I shall please myself with giving information against you. Yes! it takes a Quakeress to hide a handsome malignant plotting against the Commonwealth. Faith! you shall pay sweetly for the pleasure of Harald Sandys’s company.”

“Thou art not speaking the truth. Thou knowest that Harald Sandys was never here at all.”

“With your gracious leave I will affirm he was! ’T was your own tongue told the lie, and it puts me in a humour of delight to confirm it.”

“Thou knowest well that I was deceived, and that it was thy own wicked brother.”

“It was my — ‘own — wicked — brother?’ Lord! I would give my golden scent-coffer if my — ‘own — wicked — brother’ could hear you. John de Burg in the seat of the godly, listening to experiences, favoured with an evidence, waiting for counsels, and feeling drawn toward thee all the while! It is most delectable. You sweet saint! Do you know what you will have to pay for this honour? John is a luxury. Outlaws cost money. Pray, did he make love to you? Did he vow that for your sake he would forswear murdering and practise praying? And is Nathaniel, the dear religious youth, jealous of him? Lord! I shall die with the fun of it. ‘T will serve me to laugh at for seven years to come.”

At this moment Asa Bevin entered the room. He cast his eyes first upon Olivia. She had covered her face with her hands, but she was not weeping. She had only shut Anastasia from her sight, in order that she might the more easily be deaf to her reviling and centre her whole consciousness upon Him who could hide her in a pavilion from the strife of tongues. The perfect stillness of her attitude relieved Asa; he felt that she had retired into a peace beyond the fretful fever and stir of this world, and he turned suddenly upon Anastasia: —

“Thy chariot is waiting, and thou must go.”

She looked with contemptuous anger at the little old man in his prim garments and tall stiff hat, and asked,

“Pray, who may you be? The goldsmith from Paul’s Walk, eh?”

“I am not bound to tell thee my name, but so far I will humour thy poor pride. I am Asa Bevin, house-steward to Roger Prideaux. Thy chariot is waiting, and thou must go.”

“Base-born churl! Off with your hat in my presence!”

“A good man is the son of the living God, and it is a

crime in thee to call him 'base.' And thou mightst as reasonably bid me off with my coat as my hat. I will off with neither in thy presence. Wilt thou go? Or shall I send thy men for Stephen de Burg to bring thee to thy own place?"

"What say you, fellow? Out of my way! I have a month's mind to make my men flog you for an insolent Quaker rogue. Mistress Prideaux, remember this 29th of May. You shall date many an evil day from it. Fellow, open the door! I am thankful to escape this pestilent house. And tell your master I will haste to do him all the mischief I can."

"Thou wilt do what thou art permitted to do, and no more. The wrath of man — ay, even the wrath of woman — shall praise Him, and the rest of the wrath He will restrain."

"I will move heaven and earth for his ruin."

"Heaven and earth are God's, not thine."

"A pack of snivelling, canting, Quaker knaves!"

"Canst thou not speak without snarling dog-words? The Lord rebuke thee."

"You are an impudent varlet. I swear I will bring you down to extremities."

"Well, then, Christ for my share."

Asa was growing calmer at every threat, and the angry woman, feeling her impotence against his steady soul, was glad when the clashing of her chariot-door and the trampling of her horses' feet gave her the semblance of a triumphant escape from the scene of her shameful assault. For though she had met with so little resistance, she felt herself to be utterly defeated and humiliated.

Roger met her in the park. He stood aside to permit the chariot to pass and caught a glance of the handsome angry face within it. He had also a presentiment

that it was Anastasia de Burg, and a sudden fear for his daughter made him hasten his steps. But when he entered the parlour there was no trace of the stormy act of which it had just been the scene. Asa was directing the spreading of the evening meal, a servant was putting fresh logs upon the fire, Olivia sat in the hearth-light knitting. The homely duties quieted him. When his eyes saw them his lips uttered a blessing. But he sat long with his child that night, talking over the events of the day, for they felt that the situation was one involving danger and trouble.

“How forcible are right words!” said Job. But he might have said, with equal truth, How forcible are wrong words! It was impossible to exorcise the influence which Anastasia had scattered abroad. The room retained the clamorous echoes, the atmosphere of unrest and fear and hate, with which it had been charged by the passionate woman. So the stillness and peace of the upper chambers was a sensible relief. Roger shut the door of his bedroom and then asked himself,—

“Why art thou so heavy, O my soul? Thou art girded round by God. This is the rest that never can be shaken.”

Olivia was equally glad of the change. She stood motionless a few minutes in the centre of the spotlessness and peace of her sanctuary; but she was conscious of a great inward tumult. Anastasia's bitter words still stung her soul, and she could hardly restrain the sharp low cries that would fain have voiced her suffering. If Anastasia spoke truth, then how false was Nathaniel Kelder!

The first sorrow of womanhood had found her out. Its restless pain amazed and terrified her, and for a few moments she gave way to the passionate fear and love in her heart. She trembled like a reed in a great wind,

and the word "Nathaniel!" broke through her closed lips. At the sound she fell upon her knees and buried her face in the white drapery of her couch. It was the revelation of mortal love, and its first monitions filled her with fear. Was she indeed putting the creature before her Creator? a mortal man before Him whom her soul loved, and who had loved her from everlasting?

With a swift abnegation, with eyes raining tears, she resigned everything, gave up all her will, and all her desire, and all the sweet thoughts of love that had sprung up within her heart. Then a great calm encompassed her, and her soul refreshed itself in waves of peace and joy that came, as come the winds of God, — whence, and how, unknown to mortal comprehension.

VI.

SORROW HATH MANY FEET.

“King of the Pelasgians, various are the ills of men; nowhere canst thou behold the same wing of trouble.”

“But every one bears a ready evil tongue, . . . and to speak slander is an easy thing.”

THE village of Kelderby consisted of about fifty cottages clustered around the church and its burial-yard. It was inhabited chiefly by shepherds and husbandmen; the fishers and shrimp-gatherers dwelling in a smaller hamlet below the cliff, almost upon the sea-sands. The two hamlets were known in the neighbourhood as Upper and Lower Kelder; but the village had no market, and no special industry, neither was it upon any great highway, — only a pretty, lonely place, as natural to its locality as the bluebells were to the hills around it.

As Nathaniel rode through the winding street a pleasant sense of its homeliness fell upon his heart. The calm, serious men, smoking on the stone benches by their cottages, and the women with their arms folded under their aprons, both alike gave him a cheerful “Good e’en, sir.” And the little lads and lasses playing “How far to Babylon?” stopped their game a moment to doff their worsted caps or drop a courtesy to him. And in the dim, misty gloaming the men and the women and the elfish-looking children affected him very much like

figures seen in a dream. He knew them, and they knew him ; but the far-off, sensitive mood of his mind gave to all the unreality and remoteness of a vision of the night.

When he entered the park he made an effort to fling off this unworldlike phantasm, and with the help of a brisk gallop he entered Kelderby in a more lively and vigilant temper. The house was still and duskish. It was just the moment at which it might, or might not, be lighted for the evening ; and as it happened Jael was in the more lingering humour.

The sitting-room was empty, and though the baron's chair by the window held a volume by Mr. Richard Baxter, it had the air of a book which did not expect to be talked with again that night ; and Lady Kelder's wheel by the hearth wore also the same aspect of loneliness. Nathaniel had prepared himself for sympathy, and he felt disappointed. However, he guessed that his mother was in her own room, and he went thither. His light, decided tap was instantly recognized : —

“ Come in, Nathaniel.”

There was extreme sadness in her voice, and Nathaniel opened the door with an uncertain fear. Lady Kelder knelt by her dower chest ; her elbows were upon it, her brows rested against her folded hands ; a book lay below them, and Nathaniel, seeing it, understood the pathetic resignation of her attitude. He knew that if he should lift it he would find the “ Prayer on the Death of a Child,” wet and crinkled with tears, especially at the top of the page which had been turned to for its “ Consolation ” : —

“ If it stayed not here to enjoy Pleasure, soe neither did it Stay to be pined away with Sorrow and Care. It lived not long enough to be versed in all the Vexations of our State,

nor to run thro' that Great Varietie of Miseryes and Misfortunes which are incident here to our Nature : But went off before it had time to trye how much evil is to be Endured in this Life ; yes, before it was come to aggravate any afflictions by imagination, or to anticipate the same by Fear, or to reflect in bitterness of Spirit, and lay to heart what it did endure."¹

“ My dear, dear mother ! ”

He stooped and gently removed her folded hands, and lifted her wet face and kissed it. “ My mother, my dear mother ! ”

“ It is twenty years ago to-day, Nathaniel. Surely you have not forgotten ! I can see them taking her to her burial. Down that path they went,” and she rose and looked from the window ; “ the coffin was covered with hawthorns and lilies, and twelve of her companions, wearing white lawn, carried her. They were singing as they went ; and, oh, Nathaniel, I hear their voices now ! It was such a lovely afternoon, and the sounds filled the garden. The lilac-trees were all abloom ; if they could speak they would tell you they had not forgotten.”

“ Mother, none of us have forgotten. But should we weep for her ? Think of all she has gained, — and of all she has missed.”

“ Missed ? Yes, the child-bearing and the child-losing ; the vain cares, the still vainer hopes ; the terror of griefs looked for, the agony of those that come ; all the wrongs of wifehood, all the bitter wrongs of motherhood, — she is well out of them. Little joy has earth, and much sorrow, — much and hard sorrow.”

Nathaniel could not answer. He only drew her close to his side and kissed her wet eyelids ; and as he did so the tears filled his own eyes, and he said to his soul, “ Oh, wonderful mother-love ! ”

¹ “ Deathe made Comfortable.” Devotional book of sixteenth century.

“Come, we will go to the parlour. The dead wish not to wrong the living.”

She cooled her face with some sweet-marjoram water, and then put her arm through her son's. Slowly they went together down the wide oak stairway, making — though they thought not of it — as charming a picture as any Mr. Lely ever painted, — the aging mother in her black-silk dress and hood of white lace shading her white hair; the son, tall and strong, in high boots and Spanish leather, and a handsome doubtlet of black velvet.

The baron was standing on the hearth gazing into the fire. As they entered he turned his face to them with a smile. The waiting-men instantly began to serve supper. Jael stood at her lady's chair with her shawl and footstool. As the two women met they looked understandingly at each other. Jael had been weeping also. She had been the dead girl's nurse. But, O mystery of Life, from what lowly depths proceed thy comforts! Lady Kelder on sitting down saw by her plate a handful of wild-flowers, and her white face flushed, and a gleam of happiness and hope came into it, — a few primroses and violets and some leaves of rosemary, tied with a band of scented ribbon-grass. She looked gratefully into her husband's eyes, and perceived that while she had been weeping in her chamber he had been to the grave to weep there. The rosemary grew at its head, her own hands had planted the primroses that starred the turf, and the violets that made it sweet. The father-love had not forgotten either the child or the mother.

Nothing was said during the meal about Nathaniel's sudden visit to Sandys, but as soon as possible afterward he told the whole strange story. It made a most unhappy impression; and Lady Kelder, who was weary with emotion, very quickly grew fretful over it.

“It is easy to sit still and look troubled, Odinel, but what is to be done? I asked you to let these De Burgs alone; I told you that it was dangerous and foolish to help the wicked; but you were wiser than seven wise men that can render a reason, and I was not heeded.”

“My dear Joan, it is not a question of wisdom, but of kindness. God is good both to the evil and the righteous.”

“Yes; and God gets very unhandsomely treated for being good to the evil. Did you expect you were to be better served than the Almighty? It passes my patience that men should ever be trying to imitate God’s generosity without his omnipotence.”

“My intentions must cover the mistake, — if there be one; they were good and pure.”

“Oh, indeed! I observe that mistakes are punished without regard to intentions. Good intentions will be but a poor roof-tree when De Burg turns you out of your home.”

“Softly, softly, Joan. Why should you think that De Burg will do such a thing?”

“Because it will give him pleasure to do it. See how he has served Roger Prideaux, who never wrought him harm, unless he raised his malice by buying Sandys.”

“I think, with Nathaniel, that De Burg knew nothing at all of John’s deception. It was the doing of Anastasia. No one hath a greater horror of his son’s crimes than Stephen de Burg.”

“I am not so far gone in folly as to believe all that Stephen de Burg says on that subject, — furious, of course, at whatever blacks the honour of his family, but at the same time conceiving his family to be vastly superior to the rest of the world. If there be trouble about this affair, De Burg will go to Charles Stuart, and his forfeiture will be demanded of you.”

“It will be to his interest to say nothing.”

“Do you think Anastasia will take rest under the insult of Nathaniel’s dismissal? Truly she will not. And by my faith! I know not why Nathaniel should have interfered in the matter. ’Tis the Quaker’s bad broth, and if Nathaniel thinks he can sup against the Devil and the Quaker and the De Burg, he will need a long spoon.”

“Roger Prideaux is not to be put in such company, Mother.”

“Indeed, others are of my judgment. Sin is like poison,—many kinds, but all in their measure deadly. Stephen and Anastasia de Burg are of a quality differing from Roger Prideaux, but all poison,—all poison.”

There were a few moments of painful silence; then Kelder, hoping to change the subject, said, “I met D’Acre in the graveyard. He has had a stone of the primest quality put over his father, and was looking to it,—a young man of a very sober humour, virtuous and discreet, I think.”

“High time he remembered his father. He has been taking a wife, and so forgot the leading virtue until he had convenience.”

“Nay, but he is forward in all honourable deeds. He was discoursing with me over some new plot of the Fifth Monarchy Men.”

“By troth and faith! I am right sorry for the Protector. Between the Fifth Monarchy Men, who say the Lord Christ is coming, and the Quakers, who say that he is come and dwelling with them, he hath but a quarrelsome time.” Then stooping forward and touching Nathaniel’s arm, she continued: “This concerns not us in the main particulars; our first duty is to secure Kelderby. That rests with you, Nathaniel. To-morrow go

and see Anastasia. Better bring her to Kelderby as your wife than lose Kelderby forever."

"Mother, how can I marry Anastasia, she being such a woman as I have told you?"

"There is good and evil in her, as in all other women, and I blame her not for her passion. Indeed, it was beyond pardon to be put beneath that Quaker girl. And one thing I see plainly, if we would save Kelderby it will have to be by giving Anastasia an interest in it."

"There must be some other way, Mother. Such a course would stand neither with God's word nor with my own conscience."

"Joan, my dear heart! We are but making and widening breaches. Let us patiently digest what we have heard until to-morrow. Clearer reason may come with another day."

"Reason! That is, guessing at right and wrong. What is reason, pray? A twinkling little light, fooling men between shade and shining. I have a feeling that I trust beyond it, and it tells me that Kelderby can be saved only by Nathaniel making Anastasia his wife."

"Peace; and in God's name let the thought go. To save stone and mortar shall we ruin our son? No, Joan! If it come to the pinch you will say 'No,' and stand to it firmer than any one."

The baron's tone and expression, more than his words, silenced Lady Kelder. She had been supposing a calamity, the dread of which lay in her heart, for the sake of having it contradicted. She had hoped that both her husband and her son would ridicule her fear. It gave her a shock to find that her threat was at once accepted as a likelihood. She had at that hour no more courage to gainsay anything, and a feeling of despair invaded her.

Then that impulse which makes us speak of trivial things when the mind is occupied with some great affair led Nathaniel to talk of additions to be made in the farm offices, and the baron gave him such attention as he was able to give; but the influence of the circumstances was inexorably dominant,—their sombre eyes reflected it; their voices had the weary tones of those whose thoughts are afar off; and as the fire burned low, and the day came to an end, every word was toilsome, mysterious, weighed down with the heaviness of anxious hearts.

Lady Kelder left the two men earlier than usual. She was glad to escape to the more loquacious Jael, to whom, sooner or later, she always unfolded her anxieties and sorrows. Jael was truly shocked at the position in which the baron's kindness and Nathaniel's rudeness to the De Burgs had placed Kelderby. But though she had plenty of sympathy she had very little tact in its appliance.

"God-a-mercy!" she cried; "'t was not for nothing that the moles began burrowing about the house New Year. Secret enemies and a flitting. I pray they go not all round, and add death to it."

"Jael! Jael! It is wicked to bottom our expectations on such things. How could a blind mole, that sees not in the present, foresee the future?" But the poor lady was in a tremor of sad confirmation, passionately denying what she tremblingly believed.

"Indeed, my Lady, the dumb animals carry God's messages a long way better than man; for, right or wrong, man will add his own words to God's words. The winged birds prophesy, say what you will against it. I've seen enough myself. When Pierson had to fly to Holland, a week afore he left the rats came by hundreds to Pierson Hall, to summons him out. The rooks knew when Squire Fell was to die. The sea-birds

show the fishers what the weather will be, and where to find the fish. Dogs and horses see spirits. Cocks tell the time of day; and when men were cowards all, one of them covered shuffling Peter with shame. I think a deal, my Lady, of what beasts and birds know."

"Then you think the moles know that we are to leave Kelderby? Oh, Jael! how could you tell me?"

"They may get back orders, my Lady. I bethink me of much ill-luck turned to prosperation. The sentence had gone out against Nineveh, and there was a free set by after it. Many lets and bars God puts in a down way. And, my Lady, it is hard for ill-luck to keep foot with prayer."

But the gift of prayer is not always in our power. Words of fear, bearing Heaven a grudge at the bottom of the heart, are not prayer; and this was the definition of Lady Kelder's present mood. But as day after day went by, and nothing further was heard of John de Burg, Anastasia's threats lost their terror and their sting. Every one in Kelderby began to regard the event as past and finished, and cut off from the life which was now to go on as if it never had happened. Lady Kelder again busied herself in her still room, the baron resumed his pleasant communion with Nature and his books, while Nathaniel began to wonder if he might not with propriety pay another visit to Sandys. For the thought of Olivia was with him night and day, and the space dividing him from her was full of void and heartache.

Anastasia had not, however, forgotten them; she was even contemplating with enjoyment this very condition of affairs. "They think the evil has passed by;" and the smile upon her face was so happy that it might have answered the sweetest and kindest of affections.

Hitherto she had passed for a gay and frivolous, good-natured woman. No one suspected her of a capability for malicious wickedness. But many bad people pass for good people because they have not reached the bottom of their character. Anastasia was herself surprised at her own persistence of wrath. She had expected, even feared, that her anger would not serve her long enough to carry out any plan of revenge. It gave her a feeling of satisfaction to find that it had grown steadily in will and intensity, and that a week's interval had only intensified her hatred and her thirst for revenge.

Her delay had arisen from two causes: first, she had not been able to decide upon the course likely to give the most trouble to Sandys and Kelderby and the least to herself; secondly, her success, in any case, depended upon her father's co-operation and sympathy, and she was aware that there was a time to ask and a time to forbear asking. In certain moods Stephen de Burg would remember his cousin Kelder's kindness, and indignantly repudiate any ungrateful return. In other moods he would regard the insult offered to his daughter, not only as cancelling all good-will debt, but also as an occasion for passionate retaliation; and it was this mood Anastasia was waiting for.

One afternoon, ten days after John de Burg had regained his freedom, Anastasia was sitting thinking of him. Captain Bellingham had just left her, and Captain Bellingham usually knew whatever happened in the country-side. But though she had questioned him skilfully, he had given her no news which held the faintest suspicion of John's visit to his home. It was certain, then, that he had reached the coast in safety, found the waiting boat, and gained the security of his ship. At

that hour he was probably hundreds of miles away from his enemies. As for John de Burg, *she was the only soul that had knowingly seen him*. She laughed merrily to herself at the idea which suddenly flowed to her from this circumstance. It seemed to her that she had found the clew to a vengeance worthy of the wrong.

Her father entered in the midst of her private mirth. He was in an equally jocund mood, having got the better of "some canting Roundheads" who required taxes of him. "But I showed them that I was only a lodger at De Burg, being there at the pleasure of their Commonwealth; and therein Sir John Freemantle said I was right, and so on. Then comes Mr. Allen, and he thinks the taxes should be collected of my security; and some fell a-laughing at the proposition, and some forsoothed it; but Sir John stood bravely by me, and the case will stand finely. A pleasant day, Asia, and all things else."

"I am extremely glad on it;" and she touched the strings of her lute lightly and sang, —

"Lay by your pleading,
Love lies a-bleeding;
Burn all your poetry,
And throw away your reading.
Piety is painted,
Truth it is tainted,
Love is called a reprobate,
And Schism now is sainted."

The bright June sunshine was all over her, giving to the brilliant colours of her silk gown the prismatic rays of the peacock's feathers. Her black hair fell curling over her shoulders and upon her warm, white neck and bosom, and her hands sparkled with coloured gems as they twinkled among the strings. She was the loveliest

realization of a gay and brilliant woman, formed for the delight of the senses and the enchantment of thoughtless men.

De Burg watched her with pride and pleasant speculation, and she divined his thoughts; for she suddenly snapped the song in two, and said in a low voice, "Let me tell you the secret of Sir John's complaisance, — the king comes soon to his own again."

He opened his eyes wide and flashed their intelligence into hers; and she nodded back a charming assurance ere she continued, "There 's a *feet* in the air, a whisper in the wind, a bird in my breast, that tells me so; and, besides, a word from London that confirms all."

"Old Noll hath caught an ague."

"He hath caught death."

"Well, then?"

"If we would have the full pay of our loyalty, you know, we must go to the king. In the day of rewards those who have done so will be remembered. As for the general mass who wait for him to come to them, they cannot expect any honour in particular. Faith, sir! before a year be gone, I warrant you, men and women will be drinking the king's health upon their knees in the market-places and on the house-tops."

"Well, then?"

"Go to the king."

"My cousin Kelder would have just cause to complain of me."

"We owe nothing but hatred and ill-will to cousin Kelder, and with your good help I will pay it."

"What mean you?"

"Oh, I am deadly mad at them!" Then she laid down her lute, and carried a chair to her father's side.

“You must know, sir, that when I was but a maid in ankle-shoes Nathaniel made love to me and vowed me his hand.”

“Pray, what did you want with the sour Puritan?”

“Indeed, that is one of the miracles. But now he wants not me. He hath fallen into the toils of the Quaker girl at Sandys.”

“I have seen her. A month ago I met her with D’Acre’s wife; a pretty pair of sucking doves, truly!”

She laughed and clapped her sparkling hands together.

“Sucking doves! Marry, sir! Prideaux’s girl hath the temper of a wild-cat. She ordered me out of her presence.”

“Surely you joke, Asia; and ’t is a poor subject for your mirth.”

“Never trust me if I speak not the truth. I called at Sandys for a purpose.”

“For what purpose?” He asked the question peremptorily; for, like not a few men of small stature, he not only was easily made angry, but was rancorous when he had a grievance to avenge. “Pray, what purpose had you at the Quaker’s house?”

She looked him steadily in the face and said, “I went to see Harald Sandys.”

“What foolery is this? Harald Sandys was killed with his cousin at Marston battle.”

“My Harald Sandys is, I hope, now so far out at sea as to be beyond his enemies.”

All mirth had vanished out of her face. She was in a mood which demanded attention as she continued, “Be so good as to listen to me. For your sake, ’t is all I shall ask, sir.

“Put it in the number of my sins that I kept secretly for many weeks under your roof this gentleman, — a

fact that you will be best to forget, since it concerns you not, and is beyond your advantage. But presently, when there was like to be suspicion, I sent him to Roger Prideaux; for he hath an affectation of great kindness for the old owners of the house he bought."

"The rogue fancies that dingy guineas, made in some sort of mechanical work, can buy a right to an old estate like Sandys. I had looked to add it to De Burg, as was most natural. For only Bellingham lies between us, and there is so much of ancient intermarriage as would justify the king in making me heir where there is no other heir. Oh! I would have taken Sandys in payment of all scores against him; and then if it had come into your mind to marry Bellingham, there would have been an estate worthy of an earldom."

"I wonder not that you have ever been against this Quaker."

"Nothing moves me to anger like his name."

"All goes well, then; for now you have a good occasion to work Sandys out of an owner again. The Quaker hath doubtless been harbouring a malignant, whom he knew to be on the king's business."

"Make me wiser on the whole matter."

"'T was on the 29th of last month. I went out, as I commonly do, to ride. I took the way to Sandys, and at the gates I bethought me of the civility of making a call upon the strange lady there. Being come to the entrance, a cross old man withstood me at all points, and with many excuses; but having determined to gratify my curiosity, I would not be restrained, and, with such apologies as left him far behind, I went to the parlour. There I found Mistress Prideaux and Nathaniel Kelder, and a man whom Mistress Prideaux, with much discomposure, introduced to me as Harald Sandys, 'there being

nothing to fear,' she said, 'from one of my affection for the king.' "

"Come, this grows hugely. Nathaniel is in the plot, then?"

"So much belongs to the public ear. For your own there is much more, if you care to listen."

"Oh, I will hear to the last comma."

"Nathaniel was so much annoyed at my visit that he was hard set to give me the commonest courtesy; and when Mistress Prideaux went for a glass of wine for my refreshment, he took the opportunity to insult me beyond all patience or endurance."

"The grounds?"

"I had mentioned a ship lying off the coast, supposed to be there for certain of his Majesty's friends, and he turned on Sandys and called him John de Burg, — ordering both him and me to leave at the moment. He said, moreover, that I was unfit and unworthy to sit in the same room or to eat in the presence of Mistress Prideaux, and he bid me depart in such a way as left me for the moment at his word, seeing that I would not, for my own sake, prejudice the escape of the young man. But I went back."

"Oh! you went back?"

"And I found her alone."

De Burg laughed uproariously. "Did you take her eyes out?"

"I promise you I am nothing in her debt."

The whole plot was as clear as daylight to De Burg; but there are none so blind as those who will not see, and clearness of sight in this direction was neither to his interest nor to his pleasure. He looked with something of pity and something of admiration at the sullenly handsome face of his daughter. He saw that her anger

burned like a fire, and was likely to grow with the thoughts it fed on. For though mortified feeling turns to ridicule in cold natures, it turns to bitter hatred in passionate ones; and hatred, however it may punish others, is self-punishment of the severest kind.

He rose and walked thoughtfully about the room. Anastasia sat in the gloomy stillness of a soul stumbling from thought to thought of angry love. For when she began to hate Nathaniel, then she found out her love by her hate. She could not forget his severe, youthful beauty as he watched with gathering wrath the unfolding of her guilty plot, and his grave rebuke added to it an invincible grace. Her soul was tossed, as in a hurricane, with scorn, anger, mortified love, and a burning longing for revenge.

“Asia!”

“Sir.”

“What was, and is not, may be as if it never had been. And of what it is unnecessary to speak we will speak no more. This event begins with your visit to Mistress Prideaux. Do you understand?”

“This moment. I have forgot everything before it.”

“In all cases, and to every one, are you prepared to stand to that condition?”

“I’ll swear to it.”

“Other affairs fit into this one with a strange evidence. ’T is well known the Quakers have made many remonstrances to the Pro—I mean to Old Noll, praying for more justice than he gives them; and also that they are dissatisfied and disquieted at his indifference to their complaints. ’T is likewise well known that the king has been in communication with leading men of all parties and all creeds, sending them promises of liberty in all matters of conscience. We may suppose—we have a

right to suppose — that Harald Sandys's visit to Roger Prideaux was as the king's emissary to the Quakers, Prideaux being a man of wealth and weight among them. And Old Noll's sickness has brought every one to a consideration of what is to come when *he* goes to the devil. "The eye of a Kendal magistrate will see a great matter of treason in this affair, I'll warrant it."

"But Nathaniel — is he to go free? I wish him to suffer, and this is nothing toward it."

"You have a woman's trick of seeing only one thing at a time. Does your mind live in a lane? Nathaniel shall suffer on every hand and in every person. But I foresee in this affair the conclusion of much and the beginning of more. The king must not come home before we go to the king. We have lost too much to lose the claim which entry with him will guarantee. Prepare, then, for such a visit by giving your beauty the advancement of a flashing bravery of dress, for there is nothing like making a show of gentry in his presently shabby court. Thank your stars that I take this matter out of your hands; for it will require to take both wisdom and patience with it."

"Oh, sir, I neither wish nor need for a better stand-by. I can leave all in your care, with great contentment."

"And I swear you satisfaction. Faith! in these dull days of discontent it will be a great delight to me to turn things a little upside down; and as I owe you something for the pleasure, you shall have my Lady Levin's Iceland dog. I am advised that it is for sale."

Half an hour afterward Anastasia heard her father ride away toward Kendal. She was not afraid, she was not sorry, for the thing she had done. She went upstairs, washed, dressed, and perfumed herself; but in all her sweet coffers there was no wash or unguent for her

restless soul. Reckless and contradictory, sick with a vague trouble which she would neither face nor acknowledge, she muttered defiantly, —

“Well, I have set the ball rolling. Where it will go, and when it will stop, the Devil only knows !”

VII.

DE BURG'S FIRST MOVE.

“Find me a reasonable lover against his weight in gold.”

“Upon my word, this day certainly has turned out both perverse and adverse.”

“If a woman has any malicious mischief to do, in that case her memory is immortal in remembering it.”

“To do good to the bad is a danger just as great as to do bad to the good.”

THE day after this event Nathaniel made a visit to Sandys. It was now summer, but he remembered so well the early spring, when Olivia Prideaux had come to him as the living breath and spirit of the time. No one notices the seasons like a lover. As they balance their flight on the swift wings of night and day he makes all their changes and events a sweet calendar of his hopes and fears. For him there is then a mystery in the air, filling it with a strange sensitiveness; the sunshine is something more than the light of common day; the linnets' sweet babbling, the humid flash of the trickling stream, the white butterfly's rhythmic measures, the stillness of the summer noon, the snow-clad hills of winter, — every fair thing in the earth below, or the firmament above, is but a fresh spelling of the beloved one's name and excellences.

Nathaniel found Sandys open to the sunlight and perfume of the garden. Roger sat at his desk, but the desk

was so close to the lifted window that the roses almost touched his face and hands ; and the birds, twittering secrets in the ivy above them, might as well have been in the room. He was counting moneys and casting up expenses, doing the business with methodical thoroughness, yet not insensible to the sweeter and fairer things around him.

He lifted his eyes to the young man, and they had a welcome in them. "I am glad to see thee, Nathaniel ; thy last visit was such as might have asked another ere this."

"I like not to talk over evil which is past ; let us not speak of the man who troubled you. He is gone."

"I know not ; the great events of life are always surprises, Nathaniel."

"Surprises are what Mr. Baxter calls 'godsendings ;' and seeming good or seeming ill, they are still 'godsendings' and not to be mistrusted."

"True ; all things are done well in the ordering of unerring wisdom ; and God's ancient promise, 'As thy days so shall thy strength be,' fits every occasion, joyful or sorrowful. Yet I confess to thee that I have a strange necessity upon me in regard to my affairs. I have had warnings to set my house in order, — yea, I have cause to believe that there is some great change coming, and this apprehension of duty has been on me for some time ; but I leave all to God, and in this feeling I centre my soul."

"Roger, will you give me Olivia for my wife ? I love her with my whole heart."

"There is but one holdback in my mind ; thou hast not yet joined the cause of truth, Nathaniel."

"I have not yet felt clear to do so, Roger, and without this assurance —"

“Stand still. No man can by searching find out God ; only be willing and he will find out thee. Yet I think surely thou art not far from the kingdom ; and in the matter of Olivia, speak to her ; she shall lead us both.”

Then with a heavy heart he dropped his head over his book and resumed his calculations. He could ask no better husband for his daughter, and personally Nathaniel was very pleasant to him ; yet he sighed heavily, and the pang of renunciation was exceeding bitter. This is the way with all earthly desires granted, — always the something lacking, always the something taken ; and though Roger was well pleased that Olivia should be Nathaniel's wife, he could not contemplate without heartache the days which had been and which soon might be no more, — the sweet, calm, loving days wherein he had been everything to his child, her father, mother, lover, and friend ; but he said nothing of his own loss, and Nathaniel stopped not to consider it.

“Where is Olivia ?” he asked with trembling eagerness ; and the pathos of the father's voice and attitude was lost in the simple satisfaction of his reply, —

“An hour ago she went into the garden.”

It was an old-fashioned garden full of turning walks hedged high and close with privet and hazel bushes. Narrow beds bordered with box ran under the hedges, holding all the sweet fragile blossoms that love not the hot sunshine. In an angle of one turning there was an arbour cut in the thick green wall of privet, and there Nathaniel knew he would be most likely to find Olivia.

He had a rapid, decided step, and doubtless she heard him coming, yet she kept her eyes dropped upon the exquisitely small stitches she was sewing. She was dressed in white, but the sunshine sifting through the green roof of the arbour threw over the spotless lawn indescribable

rays of palest green shot with gold, melting into each other, changing, passing away, like the tints of the sky at evening. A large, handsome cat slept at her feet, but it in no way detracted from the peace and freshness and sweetness of the living picture.

“ ‘ My love, my dove, my undefiled ! ’ ” This strain of the sacred canticle came into his heart, and tasted sweet upon his lips. He said it over and over as he approached the girl, and perhaps in some mysterious way she felt the influence of the winged though voiceless words, for her face was covered with a rosy light, and her eyes were so full of her soul that the radiance from under the dropped lids left a glow upon her cheeks.

He had purposed to say many things in preparation of “ the words ; ” but when the heart is ready to speak it needs no introduction, and before he was aware he had said them. He took the work from her hands and clasped her hands in his own ; he drew her close to his side, and told the heavenly story of a heart which has found the soul it loves. The low words, the embrace, the kiss that spoke where all words failed, went to Olivia’s heart as the sunshine to the heart of a flower, or the sweet, soft rain to its root. In that hour Nathaniel revealed her to herself ; he interpreted the unknown language of her wistful longings ; he claimed her by some inexplicable but indisputable right for his own, and with shy, trembling happiness she acknowledged the claim. So for a little while these two blissful mortals found their lost Eden.

But it is in such hours that we all realize how impotent is the language of earth. Though moved to more than earthly rapture, they had nothing to say worthy of their emotion. Foolish as the babbling of babies is the talk of lovers, but it is a folly springing from a divine depth, —

a depth which no plummet of wisdom has sounded. The oft-repeated words, the words half-spoken, the questions asked with a look, the questions answered with a kiss, the vague, glancing, broken language of lovers! — is it not as eloquent and as wise in its foolishness as that sweet baby prattle which between a mother and her child is wiser than all wise words? Never till the soul is free from fleshly bonds shall we tell the beloved how truly we love. Never on earth shall we speak perfectly the language of heaven. We can but stammer and blunder, or ask from silence the pathetic interpretation of our mute souls. For the words we learned before we fell a little lower than the angels call to us in vain, — our tongues are tied; and though we strive to syllable the memory, we find, alas, that there is no common speech for the body and the soul! Language fails when we need it most.

But whether in speech or in sweeter silence the afternoon sped on. The sun sunk lower and lower, and with slow steps the lovers began to tread the flowery lane. Nathaniel pulled some violets and put them into Olivia's girdle. It seemed to him a wonderful thing to do; a week ago he only dreamed of such delight. A little farther on they came to the open garden, where the perfume of raspberries and the double velvet-roses mingled, and the warm light wind brought them a caress of scent, — the soul of a red bergamot flower, — and the clove carnations filled the air with their intralling odours. They forgot that they were mortal, since as yet no thought or care for the future came with anxious whisper between them.

Nathaniel had fully determined not to speak of John and Anastasia de Burg. In his heart there lay that singular superstition which at some time or other has influenced the most pious and logical minds, — a feeling that

it would be wise not to name the evil dreaded lest they might call it unto them. Yet in defiance of this resolution, in a moment, without intent, he broke it. A sudden chill and silence followed the ill-omened words, and his heart instantly reproached his tongue for them.

Everything changed in a moment; the hour of enchantment was over, and they were summoned back to common life by a shrill, weak voice calling at its highest pitch, —

“Olivia ! Olivia !”

The two words were full of anger, of terror, of some nameless dread, which the girl felt without understanding. She looked with fearful inquiry at Nathaniel, and dropping his hand hurried to the house by the nearest path.

It was Asa calling her, but his voice was so changed that she did not know it until she saw him standing in the open door. Without a word he went before the lovers into the parlour. Two strange men were there, and Roger Prideaux stood between them with irons on his wrists.

Olivia was at his side in a moment. She kissed his bound hands, and put her arms around his neck, and comforted him with that sweet love which, without saying “What is the trouble?” thinks only of consoling it. It was Nathaniel who made the inquiry. With his hand on Roger’s shoulder he asked, —

“Under what warrant do you serve an honourable man so hardly?”

“High treason, Captain, and no less.”

“Nathaniel, my son, neither make nor meddle in this business. I have a narrow path to pass through; but One goes with me able to deliver.”

“My father, trust in him !”

“‘Though he slay me, yet will I trust in him.’ Turn

thee, dear child, to Romans, eighth chapter and twenty-eighth verse. There I found, not ten minutes ago, God's grand charter of help sufficient. I was reading it as the officers crossed my threshold, and the page shone with the glory of the promise."

Upon this scene the men not unkindly turned their backs, and Asa served them with a flagon of ale and some meat and bread.

"Nathaniel! thou wilt care for Olivia?"

"With my life."

"My dear heart, I give thee to Nathaniel; for I go I know not where, nor for what time. Yet if it stand with God's will, I shall surely come back to this pleasant home; and if it stand not so,—his will be done." He looked wistfully round the room and into the garden, and then bent his head and kissed the sweet white face that lay upon his breast.

"Neighbours, I am ready. There is a long walk to Kendal, and delay at this hour can do no good."

There had been no outcry, no clamorous grief. The thing they had feared had happened to them, but they were prepared to receive it. Roger had not only set his house in order, he had also made Olivia conversant with all his affairs. So they said farewell with the noble calmness of pious souls; for piety is self-government in its highest form. Olivia pressed her white cheek against her father's, showing him eyes full of holy hope and trust. She touched his lips with lips wearing the calm smile of a soul trusting in the Omnipotent.

She went with him to the door, Nathaniel and Asa keeping, with a natural modesty, a little behind her; for the nearness of her grief gave her a sad pre-eminence. She stepped outside the threshold on to the wide flags which made a central path through the garden to the

park. On each side banks of roses filled the senses with their colour and scent. A laburnum-tree dropped its golden racemes above her head, and the westering sun made the broad, tranquil atmosphere look as if it were filled with gold-dust.

She stood in it, a slight white-robed figure, tearless and speechless, but revealing in her face and attitude feelings inexpressible, — unless it were possible to compass that vast, enigmatical language which comes in dreams. A calamitous constraint of circumstances, a strict necessity, was subduing her; but she resented sorrow, as youth must ever do. She knew that Anastasia was triumphing over her. If the blow had come from the blind prejudices of the civil power, she could have borne it better. She felt it hard that her father should have to go to prison for the crimes of John de Burg and the wicked jealousy of his sister. Hardest of all was the thought that God had permitted Anastasia to cross the threshold of their happy home and bring misery and ruin with her. Quiet as Olivia seemed to be, a great storm tossed her innocent soul. She wanted to be alone, to weep, to cry out, “My God, why hast thou forsaken us?”

But she had that in her which rung well to the striker. Though every footstep on the flagged walk was like a blow on her heart, it was a blow that stirred her into keener life. She whispered obedience, and with head inclined, inclined her heart.

Standing thus, she watched her father pass out of her sight. He walked like a man who had put the world away from him, who held it as indifferently as if it were a cast-off shoe. The irons on his wrists were unfelt; the road seemed to go upward to heaven. Holy men of all ages were on it with him. He saw with Stephen,

he heard with Paul, he communed with God, and had such comfort and strength as this world knows nothing of. And at this hour Roger Prideaux, though small in stature, looked truly noble. The officers instinctively fell behind him a few steps. They declared afterward that his face shone, and that they feared to be with him.

Presently the great trees hid all of them from sight. Then Olivia turned her eyes upon Nathaniel, — eyes soft shining through a haze of unshed tears. He raised her hand and kissed it, leading her with tender, comforting words into the lonely parlour. For a few minutes she yielded to herself, to her human need of sympathy, to her woman's need of love and strength; but soon the primitive courage of her soul rose above its weakness. She withdrew from Nathaniel's embrace; she stood upright and looked around, like one who is gathering force from every quarter.

“Asa!”

“I am here, Olivia.”

“Thou must tell Gideon to saddle a fleet horse. He is to go to my aunt Hannah Mettelane, who lives at Ambleside, and tell her that ‘the time spoken of has come.’”

“Thou art sure thou art doing right?”

“It is the word of my father, Asa. As to thyself, —”

“I am ready to do to the utmost.”

“Then put up some changes of clothing for my father; thou knowest all he will want. Surely thou wilt stay close to him, Asa?” And she went to the old man, and took his hands in hers. Their eyes met, and he gave her an inviolable promise.

“He will miss thee at every turn. Be hands and feet to him. Be a friend to him, Asa. He hath been one to thee, and now there will be many against him.”

“I will go to thy father. I will never leave him so long as he is in trouble. And take courage, Olivia: in a deluge, God’s children never miss the ark.”

“God give thee a good reward, Asa.” Then she turned to her lover. “Nathaniel, I must go to D’Acre Hall at once. My father has a right to think that Edward D’Acre will prepare such bail as may be wanted, if it come to a question of bail. He left a letter on the subject, which I must deliver.”

“I will take it for you, dear Olivia.”

“Nay, my father will not have thee meddle in this matter. Also, I have a message which is to be given, or not given, in my own discretion.”

“Until your aunt arrives, or so long as you desire it, I shall look for you to stay with my mother. If I take you to D’Acre to-night, you can rest there, and so come on to Kelderby to-morrow.”

“Jane D’Acre is my friend. To get security is not a thing of ‘ask and have.’ I may be required at D’Acre for more than one day, and I think surely that Hannah Mettelane will come with all possible speed. Also, dear Nathaniel, thy mother might not desire my presence. I must be certified of her good-will ere I put so great a demand upon it.”

“My beloved! are you not as my wife? Is not my home your home?”

“In so far as thou canst give it. But thou must not trespass on the rights of thy father and mother, nor must thou lead me into so great a snare. Jane D’Acre is my friend; I will go to her.” She spoke with a not unsuitable maidenly pride, feeling that it was Lady Kelder’s place to give her first some unmistakable evidence of love and welcome.

Nathaniel was full of sorrowful and wounded per-

plexity. He knew well how unwelcome Olivia would be at Kelderby. If he took her there, a kind of civility would not indeed be denied her. The baron would be gravely courteous, and Olivia would doubtless soon win from him a warmer feeling; but Lady Kelder would be more unreasonable. She would probably retire into her own room and refuse to see Olivia; or, if more aggressively inclined, Nathaniel understood in how many ways women can wound women (smiling as they do it), saying cruel things that defy answer or reproof, — insinuating wounds, which the victim can only bear in silence and hide from every eye.

He walked restlessly about the room, miserably conscious of his inability to give the girl he so passionately loved the shelter and help he longed to give her. She passed in and out frequently, as she made with Asa the preparations necessary for her father's comfort and the security of the house. But Asa was both by nature and education deliberate in all his movements, and he considered the present circumstances demanded, not less, but more, than his usual careful attention; there were presses and cellars and awmries to lock, servants to instruct, Olivia's special charges to provide for, — so many little things to direct, that it was after sunset before she was able to leave Sandys for D'Acre Hall.

She made no complaint about it. The pallor of her face, the sadness and subdued anger of her manner, alone told the story of her suffering. And Nathaniel showed how well he understood the girl he loved, by his sympathetic silence. She had entered the house of sorrow, and he did not walk at her side babbling and questioning and lamenting; but Olivia felt at every step how truly his love enfolded her.

The long twilight of the season soon became gray.

All glory went from the horizon, all colour from sea and land. Evening has strange sadnesses, melancholy tints and tones, pathetic intimations which the sensitive soul solemnly apprehends. The lonely road they travelled was void of all counteracting influences. It wound in and out among the bowlders of the misty heath; the sea was at their right hand, — a gray, heaving mass, uttering a mournful, sighing roar, and half hid by a veil of drifting vapour. Yet only a few hours before, the world had been so full of light and colour, of song and scent and warmth; now to the silent lovers it was a lonely, sterile world, full of mystery and gloom and strange ominousness.

They arrived at D'Acre Hall just as the twilight became night. D'Acre stood on his door-steps taking his farewell look of the day he was going to shut out of his house. He was startled by the arrival of visitors at that hour; but when he recognized Nathaniel and Olivia a look of confirmed expectation crossed his face. It was as if he had said, "I was sure this would happen." He called his wife, and in a few moments Nathaniel saw Olivia kindly received by her friend. She turned to him one moment before she entered the house, and he lifted his hat and bent his head in reply. It was the only assurance either of them needed. They loved, they trusted, they even dared, dark as the hour was, to hope.

Nathaniel did not alight. He had a long ride, and he was little inclined to talk to any one until he had consulted with his father; but it was necessary to explain Olivia's position, and he did this with as bare circumstance as possible. D'Acre, standing in the gloom with his hand upon the horse's neck, heard him with a troubled face.

“So much does not astonish me, Captain Kelder,” he answered; “I pray God it go no further. For you must know that I was in Kendal yesterday, and I heard De Burg very loud and insolent on the matter.”

“I doubt it not.”

“Squire Garnet and Thomas Musgrove and Isaac Sandal were talking with me, and De Burg, coming up to us, cried, ‘This is a foul business! Here am I, a gentleman of honour and descent, put under bonds and made but a lodger in mine own house, because I stand for what it would have been treason and death for my father not to have stood for, while that Quaker malignant called Prideaux is let live at his ease, though he be plotting in broad daylight against your Commonwealth,’ — and a deal more of the same sort of words, but mainly that Prideaux had been harbouring Harald Sandys, who was Charles Stuart’s emissary to the English Quakers; and hearing that, I went away, for truly I believe the matter to be so.”

“Harald Sandys is dead.”

“Nay, then, I know not what to think. Surely Roger Prideaux came to me for a suit of clothing for Harald Sandys; and I deem him too true a man to lie to me. And herein I am myself uneasy in the matter. It is most likely I may be hardly dealt with if my kindness be construed into giving aid to a traitor.”

“Is it needful to speak of it? Prideaux will never do so.”

“Alas, I have already talked with one who, I fear, will be easily moved to repeat my words. For meeting Phillipson one day, — and I know not when I have met him before, — we fell into talk about Sandys, and the end of so old a family, and the pity of it; and further, Phillipson said he had been the dearest friend of the late lord,

and loved him. And out of a good feeling I replied there was a certainty that one of the Sandys yet lived, and also that he was deep in Charles Stuart's counsel, and would be like, if changes ever came, to build still higher the house of Sandys. And one thing brought the other, as it ever does, and I fear that I have done wrong not only to myself but also to my friend. Surely, surely, the 'yea' and 'nay' of the Quakers is all of tongue traffic a man can manage with safety and without sin."

This confession greatly troubled Nathaniel, tossing his mind to and fro with indeterminate fugitive fears and suggestions as he galloped home. Indeed, he was so thoroughly occupied with them that he failed to conceive the different temper of minds not as yet possessed by their demands, and the baron's and Lady Kelder's cold and constrained interest in his return seemed to him most unkind. If they had met him with eager questioning and exclamations he would hardly have wondered or inquired; but that his father should placidly resume his book and his mother her spinning, as if Roger was not in prison and Olivia not a fugitive from her home, was in his present concentrated mood a real wrong to him.

"There is great sorrow at Sandys," he said with an air of injury.

The baron dropped his book, and Lady Kelder stayed her wheel.

"Roger Prideaux is taken to prison on a charge of treason against the Commonwealth. De Burg has informed the authorities that he was sheltering royalist emissaries, — in fact, Harald Sandys."

"He is well served. The old Quaker must turn patron to gentlemen in his old days, and now he has to pay the price of tampering with gentlemen's business. Faith! I cannot afford to be sorry for him."

"But this is a business, Joan, which, if possible, we must afford to help. What is the first thing, Nathaniel?"

"Bail, if admissible."

"Bail! No more of that, I pray, Odiel."

"Indeed, I fear it is beyond me. Kelderby is fully pledged for De Burg, and over Swaffham I have no power. Where is the young girl?"

"I left her at D'Acres's, but she hath no right there; if my mother would but offer her —"

"She hath no right here."

"She hath the right of my promised wife."

"Nathaniel!"

Lady Kelder rose with the word, and passionately pushing her wheel aside, she said, —

"Dare you tell me that again?"

Mother and son looked steadily at each other; there was no flinching in either face.

"She hath the right of my promised wife."

"When you tie that knot, you may tie cobwebs. And while I am mistress of Kelderby, Olivia Prideaux crosses not its threshold."

"I am sorry you cannot feel as I do in this matter, Mother."

"Sorry! No, you are not sorry. You have known my mind about the Quakers, male and female, long before you met this girl. You wanted her because you were bounden by every sacred duty not to want her. Faith! if 't were not Adam pulled the forbidden apple, 't was because his courage went not so far as his desires."

"Joan, my dear heart, fret not yourself beyond your guidance. Nathaniel hath done wrong —"

"He hath done a cruel wrong, — the cruellest wrong a son can do to the mother who bore him."

“Mother, have I not the right to choose the woman I love for my wife?”

“Son, have I not a right to say what woman shall be my daughter? Have your father and I not a right to say with what family we will blend our own family? Who gave you permission to mingle Quaker blood, and trader’s blood, with the strain kept noble and honourable through seven centuries? A boor, a lackey, may live unto himself, but you! you have no such cursed privilege, sir!”

“Indeed, I think the Prideaux may stand in all honour beyond the De Burgs.”

“Nathaniel, my mother was a De Burg.”

The baron spoke with unusual sternness, and then crossed the hearth and took his wife upon his arm. “I am afraid, Nathaniel, that your visits to Sandys have already done you much mischief.”

“I am prepared to meet it. I shall suffer with Olivia.”

“‘I!’ Do you see nothing beyond yourself, sir? Your suffering, your shame, can you bear them alone? No, your mother will have a double portion. And I think you might also respect your father’s honour, and not wound your father’s heart. If you are mixed up with these Prideaux, I too shall be under suspicion. My friends will look coldly upon me; my enemies will shoot out the tongue and say slanderous things. I shall lose my eminence among the Independents. Indeed, there needs no more to all our undoing than such an alliance.”

“I think I am doing right, Father.”

“Nothing can be right for yourself which is procured by wronging your father and mother.”

“Roger Prideaux is innocent, and I think it will be

proved so. If not, whatever is God's will, he can bravely bear it."

"God's will! That is easy said, Nathaniel;" and Lady Kelder flushed with indignation as she spoke. "It is presumptuous to ascribe all that happens, however wicked it be, to God. God *permits* both the Devil and men and women to do many things that he does not *will* them to do. There is a difference, — yes, a great difference. God may permit you to make a selfish and cruel marriage in order to gratify yourself, but he does not will or wish you to do it."

"I love Olivia; she hath the promise of my hand, — a promise I will not break. The future holds miracles; if I keep faith with my love, I doubt not but what truth and patience will conquer in the end."

"You are wonders, of course, both of you! Nothing has ever happened to your fathers that has happened to you. Nathaniel, you are a very ordinary young man, and Mistress Prideaux a very ordinary young woman. Let me tell you that the earth will not move off its axis, nor its inhabitants be turned upside down, to compass your marriage with — a Quakeress!"

This closed the argument for the night, but it was renewed next morning on a different basis, — or rather Lady Kelder refused to see or hear or feel anything touching the subject. Her own mind was made up, and she was determined not to permit discussions which could only give her pain without touching even the outermost edge of her convictions. She disliked Olivia, though she had seen her but twice; and what argument can conquer a soul's involuntary antipathy?

Olivia's serenity, her unassuming modesty of garb and manner, her peculiar form of speech, were all affectations to Lady Kelder. Besides which, she had an abhorrence

of Quaker doctrines. Extreme Calvinism had moulded her spiritual nature ; its austerity and intolerance made the boundary lines of all her ideas. She had received from Mr. Duttred as well as from Nathaniel an account of the Fox meeting at Roger Prideaux's, and had felt scandalized at Olivia's interruption of a grave theological debate. These emotional young girls, who talked of an indwelling Christ, and of heavenly visions, inspired her with no other feeling but that of dislike. She was angry at such presumption. The revelation of heavenly things unto babes, instead of unto priests, was a doctrine she did not practically admit.

In the solitude of the midnight she had sat alone with her soul and conscientiously examined her motives. And she was sure that Nathaniel's marriage with Olivia would be a most unfortunate one for her son. A Quaker wife would separate him from all their old friends and associations. Unless Nathaniel became a Quaker, there would be a divided household in religious matters. If Nathaniel became a Quaker, the remedy would be worse than the disease. In that case he would also be practically shut out from all civil offices and from all social respect. His fine position, his ancient prestige, could be used only for the spread of Quakerism. Spiritually and temporally, in her opinion, the alliance meant ruin to her son.

The baron shared her opinions, modified somewhat by a more comprehensive and masculine grasp of the subject. "If Quakerism is not of God," he said, "it will speedily pass away ; and Nathaniel hath so much sense as to discover this." He reflected also that Olivia's peculiarities would probably be softened by the social and domestic demands of life at Kelderby, and that even if they were not, the estate of Sandys was a

very fair set-off against religious opinions which in some respects his own experience justified. Still he was not inclined to encourage the marriage ; he believed truly it would be neither happy nor prosperous.

After breakfast father and son took a walk, in order to talk more freely about the situation of the Prideaux and the extent of danger likely to touch Kelderby in consequence.

"I think it is but a woman's passion," said Nathaniel. "Anastasia has no continuance of purpose, either in good or in evil."

"Herein you judge foolishly, Nathaniel. Anastasia, by her first movement of revenge, has put the matter beyond her own control. And D'Acre's report shows that Stephen de Burg has lifted her cause. In some way or other, it is his intention to make this an occasion for a quarrel with me. Then — you can see what will follow."

"He and Anastasia will go to Charles Stuart, and you will have the forfeit to pay."

"Also, I myself may fall under suspicion with the Commonwealth. Judges who look beyond the day will argue that De Burg, being my cousin, and a man of such reputed honour, would not so wrong my kindness unless under some secret agreement of mutual interest ; and the natural suspicion will be that it refers to the return of Charles Stuart. Nathaniel, I am in a very hard case. I pray you do not strengthen ill thoughts by a friendship and alliance with that Quaker, who is already doubted in his loyalty."

"We know, Father, that the man was John de Burg, and not Harald Sandys."

"We do *not* know. Your apprehension is not confirmation to any mind but your own. Also, you must plainly perceive that Prideaux entertained the man be-

lieving him to be Harald Sandys, and, on his own confession, 'about the king's business.' Nor will it help him to say it was John de Burg, while it may make my cousin and Anastasia so much more our enemies."

"Still if asked, I must tell the truth."

"If your conscience demand so much — yes."

"As for my promise to Olivia —"

"It must be set aside. All promises depend upon the power to perform them."

"I have the power to perform this promise."

"Not without committing grave wrongs to your mother and me. A promise kept under such circumstances is worse than broken."

"I have an obligation to Olivia, and also to Olivia's father. I cannot break it."

"You have an obligation far older and more sacred to your mother and to your own father. Do not dare to break it, lest you lack God's blessing on all else."

"Is it not said that a man shall leave father and mother for his wife?"

"It is said they '*shall*' do so. But it is not said that they '*ought*' to do it. It is also said that men '*shall*' deny God, and persecute the saints, and commit all manner of sin. Your mother said truly last night that many things are permitted of God that are not of God's will. Let me tell you that a life of self-indulgent love will smart as death. There is always a way to reconcile duties, if men will patiently take counsel of God and put away the spirit of self-serving."

Nathaniel's answer was interrupted by the approach of an officer with a summons for Nathaniel Kelder to appear before the Kendal magistrates on the following day, as a witness in the complaint of the Commonwealth against Roger Prideaux. And in further conversation

with the man it was ascertained that Olivia Prideaux, Asa Bevin, John D'Acre, and Stephen de Burg with his daughter Anastasia had also been cited. He stated further, that the examination was likely to cause great excitement, and to be attended by many sympathizers on both sides.

The news, though expected, was startling. We think we have prepared ourselves for an event, but we never have. Its arrival is always a shock. Both men dreaded the camp of gowned conflict. Both men would far rather have buckled on their swords and gone to the battlefield for the Commonwealth than enter those treacherous lists.

"But the evil we have called unto us," said the baron, with a sigh, "we must face."

"Well, then, Father, the good man stands under the eye of God, and therefore stands. Courage carries the day, and love won't fail us anywhere."

For Nathaniel had one of those souls born for adversity, which win from it the strength to nerve themselves for the loftiest endurance or endeavour, —

"E'en as the falcon, when the wind is fair,
Close to the earth on lagging pinion goes ;
But when against her beats the adverse air,
She breasts the gale, and rises as it blows."

VIII.

THE KING'S SERVANTS.

“He who deceives by an oath acknowledges that he fears his enemy, but despises God.”

“Like to a sea-girt rock I stand,
Deep sunk in peace though storms rage by,
As calm as if on every hand
Were only Thou, O God, and I!”

WHEN Nathaniel awoke the next morning he had a moment's wonder as to where he was; for the brattle of sweet-tongued bells clashed and clanged in the sunny air with a joyful melody. He leaped up to the exultant octaves, his soul, independently of his will, setting them to the musical old chime, —

“O! te laudum millibus,
Laudo! Laudo! Laudo!
Tantis mirabilibus,
Plaudo! Plaudo! Plaudo!
Gloria sit gloria,
Domino in altis;
Cui testimonia,
Danter et præconia,
Cælicis a psaltis.”

There is a kind of compulsion in such familiar rhymes, the mind perforce goes through them; and yet before the charming words were half recalled Nathaniel had suffered a sudden depression. The old question, What is the matter? deadened the last lines, and they sung themselves mournfully out of his consciousness.

He had left Kelderby for Kendal on the previous day immediately after receiving the summons, and had spent the night in the Crown Inn of that town. With the recognition of this fact came the instantaneous memory of all the unhappy circumstances which had brought him to the unfamiliar room ; and he was compelled to acknowledge that Roger's affairs were capable of being worked to much loss and sorrow. He had found him so strictly confined that it was impossible to get speech with him, and the general opinion was adverse to his case.

He was also troubled about Olivia's position ; for on his way to Kendal he had called at D'Acre Hall, and found that D'Acre had retreated into the safest lines of popular approval. Olivia was constrained and unhappy. She felt the chilliness and anxiety of her entertainers, and she regretted having left the fortress of her home.

D'Acre being also summoned, it would have been in friendly accord with the circumstances to have detained Nathaniel until the morning, or else to have accompanied him to Kendal without further delay. But D'Acre did not wish to be associated with people suspicious in the public eye. The charge of Olivia annoyed him very much, and he thought it would be a wrong to his young wife to have her seen with the girl. He did not indeed say so, but Nathaniel had one of those souls which see our human nature behind the veils of Eleusis. He understood the sickness which would prevent Mistress D'Acre going to Kendal with her guest ; he felt the frosty hospitality, the bareness of sympathy which wounded and repressed Olivia, and he was glad to hear her say, —

“If God will, I shall go back to Sandys to-morrow.”

“You will do right, Olivia. Sorrow should bide at home.”

“I think so,” answered D'Acre, who was nettled by

Nathaniel's tone more than by his words. "If a man can salute his own special troubles, he does as well as flesh and blood can do."

"True, D'Acre, if flesh and blood were all."

There was such sadness in Nathaniel's voice that D'Acre did not word the quick answer he had ready. For we are complex creatures; and if it be true that when we would do good evil is present with us, it is equally true that often when we would do evil a good thought or a kind feeling restrains the evil.

Nathaniel dressed quickly, with a certain careful splendour, and he was still young enough to eat heartily, though Anxiety sat down at the table with him. The sky was without a cloud; the sunshine filled the streets; the bell-ringers kept up their happy riot of exultant melody; the shopkeepers stood with broad, beaming faces at their doors; the women were at the open windows. For it was pretty Mary Pierson's wedding-day; and because human nature never wearies of its prime elementary feelings, the wedding peal found some echoes in nearly every heart.

Nathaniel walked slowly through the clean white streets. The wedding was over, but men and women still stood together talking about it. He went thoughtfully forward until he had passed the parish church, then turning he saw Parson Derby just leaving the rectory, and Stephen de Burg was with him.

The examination was appointed for eleven o'clock, and before that hour a great number of people were in the Town Hall. The wedding had broken into the day's work, and the trial of Master Prideaux was more attractive to them than their belated tasks.

When Nathaniel entered it, his first glance fell upon Olivia. She sat near the bench for the magistrates, a

little apart, and quite alone. D'Acre had brought her thus far, and then found in his own affairs an excuse from further attendance. She was not sorry to bid him farewell; for a friend who has fallen below his profession is a contemptible creature, even to himself. As he turned from her the Hall bell began to ring, and she could not help feeling that it was a forlorn bell, tolling for one who had lost a great opportunity.

A few minutes after D'Acre's desertion Nathaniel saw her. She was dressed with extreme plainness in a black gown, though a kerchief of white lawn covered her throat and bosom, and a hood of white sarcenet lay across her bright hair. Its silken sheen and the clear purity of the lawn made around her head reflections of white light, quite distinct in the dusty atmosphere of the room, and in them her fair face looked as a white rose looks in the garden's golden sunshine.

Nathaniel went to her side and spoke to her in whispers, — he scarce knew what words, only that they came straight from his heart, and were altogether made of love and pity. Men and women whom they heeded not, looked at them with interest and sympathy; for if Nathaniel had stood up in the midst of them and said aloud, "I love this girl with all my soul," he could not have taken them into his confidence more completely. And it was pleasant to see the little groups affecting a kind disregard, — turning from their points of observation, or finding in their own affairs a suddenly overwhelming interest.

In the few moments' grace thus afforded, many things were hurriedly said; they talked as souls may talk who meet after cycles of separation, hastening their confidences because their parting may come before their sweetest thoughts are told. Holding her hand, watching with brimming eyes the tears upon her cheeks, feeling as if

life held only that precious ten minutes, Nathaniel talked with Olivia.

Then there was the sound of laughter and of footsteps on the stone stairway, and the rush of that invisible force which always accompanies the entry of a number of human beings into a room. Parson Derby and Stephen de Burg came first; Anastasia was just behind them, Squire Chenage and Sir Edward le Tall walking at her side; Judah Parke and Elijah Waring, magistrates, followed. It was said that Elijah Waring favoured the Quakers, and that his wife Jenifer had joined the society; but Judah Parke was a Presbyterian of the strictest sort, and a Quaker was an abomination to him.

A sudden silence, slightly broken by whispers and shuffling feet, followed; then the jailer entered with Roger Prideaux, who walked between two constables. He had to pass within a few feet of Olivia, and as he did so she obeyed the impulse of her heart and rose and kissed him, — kissed his face, and then casting her eyes upon his still manacled hands, she stooped and kissed them also. The act was involuntary; it was finished before a word of dissent could be spoken, but as she sat down again an indescribable murmur of sympathy ran through the room.

It angered the parson, and he asked peremptorily that the examination of Roger Prideaux be immediately begun. The first witness called was Anastasia de Burg. She rose with that flurry which seemed inseparable from all her moods, in spite of the pride bred in her by her order and position; she readily took the proffered oath, though with some incoherence, for she was confused with the consciousness that Nathaniel's eyes were upon her.

Never had she been more bewitchingly beautiful; never had she dressed herself with a more enhancing

splendour. She wore a petticoat of lead-coloured satin, with an overgown of lavender moire, trimmed with silver buttons and silver lace. A whisk of fine white point was her neck-dress, and above her flowing curls drooped a low beaver hat, heavy with white and lavender feathers. Long lavender gloves embroidered with silver covered her hands and arms; she carried a little Indian cane painted and gilt, and at her waist was a silver chain, holding half a dozen Italian cameo seals, — the extravagant fad of the day.

Being interrogated as to her knowledge of Roger Prideaux's guest, she said, —

“ ’T was on the 29th of May I was out driving, as is my custom, and passing Sandys Hall I bethought me of the many strange rumours I had heard of the new owners, and I determined to gratify my curiosity regarding all these. ’T was said also that Mistress Prideaux was a wonder of womanhood, — of a very sober humour, infinitely discreet and virtuous, — and I had a mind to see such a miracle of my sex. I found the door guarded, — as treasures are said to be, — by an old dragon, who refused me entrance with many excuses, all of which I denied with a determination that won my way; and so I came to the parlour, where I found Mistress Prideaux and Captain Kelder and a strange gentleman of a very brave countenance, whom Mistress Prideaux told me was Harald Sandys, ‘fearing nothing,’ as she said, ‘from a person of my opinions.’ ”

“ What said you? ”

“ I said the king’s — I said Charles Stuart’s friends were my friends; and so on with discourse of that kind, until I spoke of a ship lying off Barrow, said to be there for his Majes — for certain of the friends of Charles Stuart; and with that he immediately disappeared, and I saw him no more.”

“What said Captain Kelder?”

“He spoke only of things in general, — such speech as gallants make to young women, and young women forget.”

“What said Mistress Prideaux to this sudden departure?”

“Mistress Prideaux had just left the room for a cordial, and I, finding Captain Kelder’s company not to my liking, took a hasty leave upon some excuse, and so to Madam Cecil’s at Milnthorpe, where I related what had passed and spent the night.”

“Why did you not tell the proper officers at once?”

“In faith! I am not paid to protect the Commonwealth; I leave that to wiser heads. If ’t was Harald Sandys I wished him safe away, — and no harm, I trust, in a woman’s good wish. But all are not equally discreet. Some of Madam Cecil’s maids heard of the affair, and so it passed around until my father demanded of me the right of the report; further, the question is his, not mine.”

“You are certain this stranger was Harald Sandys?”

“I have never seen Harald Sandys. I took him on the word of Mistress Prideaux, — who is vouched for as beyond a lie.”

“Would you know the man again?”

“On my word and honour, anywhere.”

Olivia Prideaux was the next witness. Anastasia retired, and she stepped into her place. The contrast between the two women was sharp, — that between their manners still more remarkable. Anastasia had been restless and self-conscious; her fingers had toyed with her seals all the time. While speaking she had pushed a froward curl behind her ear, and shaken a fine handkerchief with strawberry buttons upon it, and opened her vinaigrette, and broken to pieces one of the red roses at her bosom.

Olivia was quite still ; she was asked to take the oath. Her answer was low but distinct, —

“ I dare not.”

“ The law bids you do it,” said Parson Derby.

“ Christ forbids me. ‘ Swear not at all,’ — thou canst read for thyself.”

“ ’T is an excuse,” said Judah Parke. “ These Quaker women love nothing better than the cry of martyrdom ; and we may plainly perceive that this girl will rather go to prison than tell the truth against her father. My advice is that we take her on her word.”

There was some discussion on this proposal, and meanwhile Olivia stood at perfect rest. Her hands, folded on the railing before her, made no movement ; her interior sight, being toward Him who is invisible, gave to its mortal symbols a holy fixedness of purpose ; her face was as calm as the face of a happy sleeper ; her body, though she was standing, was full of repose ; for the consciousness of God’s presence was so real to her that she quieted herself in it, as a babe is quieted who feels the throb of its mother’s breast and the clasp of its mother’s arms.”

“ Mistress Prideaux,” said Elijah Waring, “ we will take your word, as an oath is a point of conscience with you.”

“ A foolish concession, Master Waring, and I will still say so ; for if this scruple stand, it will be a cloak long enough to cover all the Jesuits that may come into England,” and the priest frowned angrily.

“ Still, Parson, we shall not reach the witness without it. For myself, I will take Olivia Prideaux’s word if she tell us plainly when and where she first saw this Harald Sandys.”

“ On the 20th day of Fifth Month, in the garden at Sandys.”

“What said he?”

“That he was Harald Sandys, and that he had been upon the king’s business to Penrith, and was like to fall into the hands of his enemies, and so lose his life.”

“You think him to be the man he said?”

“At the first, truly so. He told us of his wound at Marston Moor, and of his escape to Charles Stuart, and I believed him.”

“Do you favour Charles Stuart as ruler of this realm?”

“I favour him not.”

“Does your father favour him so?”

“My father is a lover of the Commonwealth and of the Protector.”

“Why, then, did you succour an emissary of Charles Stuart?”

“I succoured him not as Charles Stuart’s friend.”

“How, then?”

“As a perishing man. When he fell at my feet and said, ‘Save my life,’ I felt favoured to do so. What wouldst thou have done?”

Waring looked troubled, but he answered brusquely, “I hope I should have done right. Did you hear him speak of the Quakers, and of Charles Stuart’s pity for their sufferings?”

“He spoke not of Charles Stuart, nor yet of the people thou callest Quakers.”

“Your father knew that he was Harald Sandys?”

“He believed him to be Harald Sandys.”

“He knew him to be on some business for Charles Stuart.”

“Yes.”

“Why, then, did he succour him if he is a lover of the Commonwealth?”

“Because he was miserable and in danger. Said God

ever to a miserable man, 'Whose son art thou?' or to a perishing man, 'Servest thou the king, or the Commonwealth?'"

There was a low murmur of assent through the room, and Elijah Waring looked at his associate with anxious eyes. He saw him not, for he was steadily regarding the young girl who had asked such a searching question.

The priest broke the silence that followed. "You Quaker women are better at demanding than at answering; and by my word, for one so wise, you took the man on light evidence. He might have been a murderer, a pirate, or a thief, for aught you know. Show us by what signs you were satisfied that he was in reality Harald Sandys."

"I have been given to understand that he was *not* Harald Sandys."

"*Oh!*"

This "oh" sprang involuntarily from many a lip, and in all variety of tones. Parson Derby looked exceedingly gratified, and his "oh" was one of proud satisfaction; for he perceived that his penetration had touched an important point of evidence.

"When were you given to understand this?"

"After he had gone, suddenly, without any words of thanks or kindness."

"Who gave you to understand it?"

"Nathaniel Kelder."

There was a general ejaculation of surprise, and every eye that could command him was fixed upon Nathaniel. He bore the inquisition with an unmoved countenance, though his gaze was full of fire and the lines around his mouth were stern and steady. Anastasia looked at him for a moment,—a rapid glance that was first entreaty, but was instantly turned to defiance by the calm severity

of his face ; then she let her gaze drop upon her seals, and lifting one she began in a low voice to talk to Sir Edward le Tall about it.

“T was brought out of the Indies, I do believe : an idol’s head very like, and sure they took the Devil himself for the pattern of it ; but I am extremely fond of the oddity of the ugly thing.” And all through this fantastic whispering she heard the question she was dreading to hear.

“If he was not Harald Sandys, who then was he? Were you given to understand so much?”

“He was John de Burg.”

A low, sharp cry, like that of an animal caught in a trap, followed. It came from the lips of Anastasia ; but it was not noticed in the more furious outburst of her father.

“You lie, woman!” he shouted passionately ; and then turning to Nathaniel : “And you, sir, are a damnable liar ! Digest the word at your leisure.”

A few moments of uproar followed. Nathaniel sprang to his feet, but instantly sat down again, with his back to De Burg. The justices gave this and that order, and the constables struck the unoffending prisoner. But De Burg, having a method in his madness, speedily allowed his anger to give place to the law’s demand, and at the request of the magistrates permitted the inquiry to proceed without further disturbance.

Olivia’s cheeks had become whiter, her eyes darker, her bearing more dignified, but otherwise she had let the drift of passion pass her by as if she heard it not. When the examination was resumed, she was in a mood of perfect composure.

“Do you believe it was John de Burg?”

“I do.”

“Why do you believe it?”

“On the word of Nathaniel Kelder.”

Olivia was then permitted to sit down. She had to face Anastasia as she walked to her place, and Anastasia did her best to make the few yards a fiery passage. But her spite and contempt and anger were utterly flung away. Olivia walked in her own atmosphere, and nothing evil entered it. She saw not her enemy, she heard not her scornful laugh, she felt not the hating glance of her evil eyes; for she was within the shadow of His wings, and He kept her in perfect peace.

Nathaniel Kelder was the next witness. His words were clear and strong and to the point. He spoke without fear, and without evident anger; yet his heart was hot within him.

“I went to Sandys on the 29th of last May. A man was sitting in the parlour with Mistress Prideaux, reading aloud ‘The Elixir’ of Mr. George Herbert. I was told that it was Harald Sandys; but I knew that it was John de Burg.”

“Oh!” cried Stephen de Burg, “this is the perfectest lie! John de Burg reading the saintly George Herbert! As well tell us the Devil was reading the Gospels.”

“It was John de Burg,” reiterated Nathaniel.

“How were you certified that it was John de Burg?”

“Nine days before, I was told that John de Burg had been hid in his father’s house for six weeks; and I was asked to shelter him and aid him further. I refused to do so. Evidence indisputable to my mind made me understand that Harald Sandys and John de Burg were the same man. As John de Burg I ordered him to leave Sandys on the instant; and to avoid arrest by me, he leaped from a window and went at my word.”

“‘T is more and more beyond belief!” shouted the

irate De Burg. "John is a world-wide villain, but yet too much De Burg to go on your order."

"I have nothing further to say."

"Asa Bevin!"

The old man rose at once, and advanced with the air of one who not only has something to say, but who is determined to say it. His small, prim figure, his thin, resolute face, his tall stiff hat planted firmly on his head, were provocative of opposition.

Judah Parke felt the spirit of persecution stirring in his heart. It seemed to him like an agreeable sense of duty, and he bent forward and said sharply, —

"Asa Bevin, remove your hat."

"Best Wisdom inclines me not to do so. When I pray to God, I uncover my head; and I will not give to thee and sundry the honour I give to God."

"Jailer, take off his hat."¹

The hat was instantly thrown to the floor. It fell at the feet of one who kicked it out of his way, and so touching another was kicked farther, and thus until it was beyond sight and reach. Asa looked after it with a queer wrinkling of his thin face. It made mirth also for the crowd, to whom a stray hat is ever a thing for kicks and jokes, and some quip of vulgar wit just hitting the time put even the magistrates in a guffaw of laughter.

Asa looked and listened with contemptuous anger; and when Judah Parke, recovering first, asked, "What say you to this merry uncovering of a Quaker?" Asa

¹ At this date men wore their hats constantly both in the house and in church. They sat at meals in them. They listened to a play in them. The preacher went to the pulpit in his hat, the congregation doffed theirs only at the name of God. Hat-lifting was a foreign fashion but recently brought to England. Sober men wore their hats. Wits and fops carried theirs in their hands most of the time.

answered, "The fool's heart is full of laughter, but whenever did the saints of God live in laughing and mocking?"

"Give him the oath."

"Thou knowest I will take no oath. I will speak the truth without the great presumption of summoning the Almighty God to be witness for me. Neither at thy command will I break the command of One who is thy Lord and Master as well as mine."

"If you take not the oath, then we must send you to jail; and as for the command of Christ, ask the parson, and he will tell you that it referred to profane speech, not to oaths for the sake of truth and justice."

It was Waring who spoke; for he pitied the man who was wilfully electing himself to the martyrdom of the jails of those days. Asa looked at the parson, but without any design of asking information from him; for he immediately denied the reconciling statement.

"Thou art all wrong. Profane speech had been unlawful since the days of Moses. But not for any magistrate will I break either the law of Moses or the law of Christ. Thou canst send me to jail for my refusal, if thou wilt to do so."

"I understand not the law of Moses and the law of Christ specially so," said Parson Derby, with an air of authority.

"Thou needest God to make thee understand God."

"I preach a true doctrine. 'T would be well if you would come and hear it."

"Many preachers hear not themselves. And as for instruction, God speaks to man without ringing of church bells."

"This fellow will dispute all day long. Take his word on the matter in question; the refusal to take

oath is but a door to get out of testimony against his master."

"Asa Bevin, what know you of the man called Harald Sandys?"

"Olivia Prideaux brought him to me on the 20th day of Fifth Month,—a dirty, wicked-looking vagabond as ever I saw; and 't is not railing, but straight truth to say so. 'T was a face with the mintage of Satan on it, and many things were made manifest to me concerning the man and his wicked deeds."

"By what name was he known?"

"Roger and Olivia Prideaux believed him to be Harald Sandys, until he was past putting to the question. I ever doubted it."

"Why?"

"Because the Sandys face is one that hath the thought of God and the fear of God behind it. This man had the countenance of one who is wicked both of nature and of will."

"What said Roger Prideaux to you of him?"

"He said that he was Harald Sandys. He told me the man had been to Penrith on the business of Charles Stuart, and had been closely pursued; and that for the sake of human kindness he would shelter him until the ship he waited for arrived."

"What thought you?"

"I thought that the Sandys were well all dead if this man stood in their likeness. But he was none of their kind."

"How did you discover that?"

"First, by my own wisdom taught of Best Wisdom. Second, 't was Anastasia de Burg discovered me so much of her affairs. She came to Sandys on the 29th of Fifth Month, and at her first calling stayed not long. Yet

she went away in a great passion with Nathaniel Kelder. 'T was my place to be on the watch, and I heard her threaten him with her own wrath, and also with the wrath of the man he ordered from the house; and I heard her call that man John de Burg, and with his name make good her threat."

Then Stephen de Burg rose in a fury of passion. "Will your Worship," he cried, looking to Judah Parke, "restrain the lying speech of this pestilent rogue? John de Burg in a Quaker's house? Yes, when the Devil drinks holy water. And I count it but scant kindness in my neighbours to suffer this reproach in my presence. For as the Devil hates the Cross, so I hate John de Burg and all his deeds. And I will take oath that I have not seen his face these twenty years, nor wish to see it again all the days of my life. And I will take oath that it is an incredible thing he should be under my roof, even for one night. Call the witness of my eight servants and of my many guests."

"I perceive not," said Elijah Waring, "what it would advantage Roger Prideaux to put John de Burg in the place of Harald Sandys. The latter, though an offender against the law, is at least an offender with clean hands, having the plea of honourable conviction in his breaking of the law. John de Burg, with red hands, has broken not only the law of God, but the law of every nation on the face of the earth."

"On my soul! the advantage is plain enough. Harald Sandys, being cousin to the late lord, is heir-at-law of the estate bought by the Quaker Prideaux. John de Burg is outlawed of all estate. And 't is within my knowledge that Prideaux was borrowing money to give Harald Sandys. Who so blind as not to perceive that when the heir had been disposed of for a time the old

rogue would sell Sandys and realize again the guineas he had spent upon its purchase? Oh! 't was a very Quaker-like plot, and I make no doubt your Worships see it."

"Think you 't was for money Harald Sandys visited Prideaux?"

"Never trust me if I see not the truth clear behind all pretences. Charles Stuart wanting an emissary to the Quakers, mutinous under their deserved punishments, naturally sends Sandys, who knows well this corner of Westmoreland, the nesting-place of this Devil's doctrine; and Sandys naturally applies himself to the Quaker, so conveniently placed both for his own rights and for those of the king — *that was*. And further, Edward D'Acre can testify that the guest of Roger Prideaux was truly Sandys. Also offer Prideaux and his man Asa Bevin the oath of allegiance, and see if they will take it; I vow they will not."

"There is no need of any further evidence," said Parson Derby. "The case against Prideaux is fully proved."

"It is most certain," added Parke. "Nevertheless he shall have every show of justice. He shall speak for himself. Let Roger Prideaux be sworn to his own words."

"I have not been given anything to say in this matter. My daughter has witnessed for me. She spoke the truth."

"Then," said Parke, "Roger Prideaux must be sent to Appleby jail for trial at the next general assize; and if Asa Bevin take not the oath of allegiance, he must also go upon that failure."

"I am an honest lover of the Commonwealth," answered Asa, "but I will not swear to it at thy command; for the words of Christ, as I have told thee already, are

positive regarding oath-taking, — 'Swear not at all,' and I will not make light of them to give thy words honour. Not I, indeed !”

“Then you send yourself to prison.”

“Nay, but thou sendest me, because I will not sell my conscience for a mess of pottage.”

Then the clerk began to write out the necessary papers of commitment, and the petty court rose, the magistrates and citizens forming into little groups eagerly full of the same subject, — the plotting of the Quakers against the Commonwealth, and their obstinacy in their own opinions.

De Burg and his party drew together with a sense of triumph. Parson Derby wished only that “there were jails enough in England to send every Quaker to the Devil through them ;” and a Calvinist preacher, standing by, certified the wish with a quotation from the devout and learned Richard Baxter, dooming all Quakers, “without reserve, to certain perdition.” De Burg himself was sullenly angry. He hated his name and affairs in the mouth of “the villain crowd,” and his heart was burning with wrath against Anastasia and the Kelders. He stood by the side of Sir Edward le Tall, saying nothing to him, but assuring his savagely offended inner man of reprisals hardly to be accomplished without some devilish help.

Le Tall, De Burg, and Parson Derby quickly left the room ; Anastasia lingered a little behind. She had received one look from her father promissory of what was yet to come, and it roused in her a desire to pay some one in advance. Drawing up her gloves and setting all her bravery in order, she strolled past Asa Bevin. He was standing in charge of a constable, waiting the written order for his commitment, and she regarded him with eyes of malicious triumph.

“Have I done what I promised to do?” she asked.

“The Devil through thee hath done what he was permitted to do. His servants never want work, but he pays ill wages, Anastasia de Burg. Seek thee a better master.”

In a moment Chenage struck him, and the old man fell to the floor. Olivia, whose face was on her father’s breast, saw nothing of the circumstance, but as Anastasia turned she met the full gaze of Nathaniel Kelder. What shame for her there was in it! His eyes burned her somewhere beyond mortal touch. She dropped her own to escape the piercing glance that made her blush and quiver with an intolerable chagrin; and though she held her head high, her laugh was uneasy, and her spirit cowered before him and was glad to escape his presence.

The upper part of the room was then almost empty, but there was a crush of delaying gossips around the entrance. Suddenly a man taller than any around him appeared, and they instantly parted right and left and made a path for him. He had a fair, large, radiant face, and a carriage full of authority. He went straight to Prideaux and laid his hand upon his shoulder.

“Friend Roger, I have just heard of thy trouble. How is it with thee in the storm?”

“It rages all around me, but not above me.”

“The soul has two houses, Roger, — one in the meadows, that is Love; one in the mountains, that is Faith. Flee now to the mountains; from thence cometh thy help. Olivia, my dear daughter, Jenifer Waring waits for thee. Shall I take thee to her?”

“I will take her,” said Nathaniel.

“Thou art a good, brave man. I thought that of thee at the first. Wait for me outside. I have a special word for thee.”

Then Olivia knew that the moment of parting had

come ; but she filled its little space with a whisper of vastest comfort. And so they said farewell like those who trust in God ; the ring of faith in their voices, the smile of hope on their lips.

Many looked at the lovers as they walked through the room and down the steps together, Nathaniel very erect, yet holding Olivia's hand with a tender pride that silenced every unkind word. At the door they found Jennifer Waring waiting in her coach for Olivia, and she received her with a sober kindness that the most timid must have trusted.

"Olivia Prideaux will find shelter in my house so long as she wishes," she said to Nathaniel ; and then she gathered her in her arms, and gave the word which separated the sorrowful lovers.

In the mean time Roger was rapidly giving Fox the points upon which his accusation hung, and Fox was listening with the air of a man who already knew them.

"These things I will care for, Roger," he answered. "In the will of God thou must go now as he makes way. It seems then that thou art wanted at Appleby jail. See thou kindest a fire there and leave it burning. And verily I know that God keeps for his people in prison consolations such as he gives nowhere else. On the bare ground I have had sweet sleep ; and in the midnight God's comforting presence has awakened me, and continued with me unto the morning watch. Thy enemies are his enemies. Verily, he will arise and scatter them. And of thy bitterest cup thou shalt say joyfully, 'My God is the portion of it.'"

"George, thy words are strong to lean upon. Say a few to Asa Bevin."

Asa was just rising from the floor, and still dazed and trembling with the shock of the blow.

"George, is it *thee*? I have been struck."

"Well, then, Asa, thy Lord Christ was also struck and buffeted. He knows all about the pain and the shame. Fear not."

"I fear nothing that man can do unto me. Not I!"

"There is a hard road before thee."

"I see His footsteps on it."

"And a steep road, shelving down even to the depths of the grave."

"I lean upon the Cross. A good staff! It will never fail me."

"Farewell, Asa! I have been given to see that we shall meet no more in this world."

"Well, then, George, it is a good farewell;" and stepping forward, and lifting up his hands, palms outward, he said, "Bear witness that for all the mercies I have received I praise and magnify my God!"

The old man was at this moment beautiful. The shining of the Light within transfigured him; and, like Stephen of old, his face was like "the face of an angel." The spirit mastered the flesh, and George Fox saw not the outer but the inner man.

So Roger Prideaux and Asa Bevin went that day to Appleby jail, but the Lord went with them.

IX.

THE BARON AND ANASTASIA.

“He that hateth suretiship is sure.”

“For the good angel will keep him company, and his journey shall be prosperous, and he shall return safe.”

“Where the Devil cannot go, he sends a woman.”

HAVING seen Olivia depart with Jenifer Waring, Nathaniel waited for Fox at the door of the Town Hall. He came to him with Roger and Asa, and the short, sharp parting of the four men was made in the passing. Then Fox said, “Come, Nathaniel, thou hath now no time for delay;” and as they walked together to the Crown Inn, and while Nathaniel packed his saddle-bag, Fox urged upon him the necessity of an immediate journey to London.

“Thou must truly go home and get thy father’s authority to act in this place, but thou must not otherwise linger a moment. It is within my knowledge that Stephen and Anastasia de Burg intend to leave England, and that at the first hour possible.”

“Who has told you so, George?”

“Who? Dost thou think God has no way of speaking but through the lips of a man? I tell thee their secret chambers have been seen by me, and my ears have heard the false words they have whispered together. Ride as swiftly as the best horses can carry thee, and spare not thine own strength, for thy urgency in this matter may binder great sorrow to thy father and mother.”

“ My father did a noble kindness for the love of God and kindred. I think, then, that God will guard him in it.”

“ God gives us good things with our own hands. If he wills thee to be providence to thy parents he does thee a great honour. Dispute not with him concerning it. And take no half-word from Cromwell ; stand stanchly by thy case and thou wilt win it.”

“ I think my father is such a man as will stand to his promise, though it bring him to ruin.”

“ I think that also, if this were an honest agreement between man and man, but it is the plotting of the wicked against the merciful and righteous ; and as the wind sown came out of their granary, thou must do thy part to make them reap the whirlwind. Farewell, Nathaniel.” And the lofty confidence of the man’s soul gave to his majestic person an authority so pronounced that Nathaniel felt it impossible either to dispute the wisdom or to doubt the result of the order given him.

So he left Kendal at a hard gallop, and as he neared the sea he began to feel the daring that the good salt wind blew into his nostrils. Then his heart burned with the injustice and bigotry he had witnessed, and he was blamelessly angry at the ingratitude which compelled him not only to take back a kindness, but also to leave the woman he loved, in her sorrow and loneliness, and undergo the annoyance and loss of a long and weariful journey. But while the sun dropped in tired splendour below the horizon, and the stars moved along the edges of the hills, and the hills grew larger in the twilight, and all Nature seemed to be lying asleep in the diffused silence and dusk, he gathered strength for the task with every mile he rode ; for he felt the presence of God in that communion which is the peace and power of the spirit.

It was so late when he reached Kelderby that all the

household were in bed. But the baron was not asleep; he heard the gallop of Nathaniel's horse while he was a good way off, and he rose and opened the door and met his son on the threshold. The two men went into the dark house together, and for some minutes were fully occupied in getting a light and in replenishing the fire, for the nights on that bleak coast were generally chill and damp enough to warrant a blazing log.

While they were thus engaged Lady Kelder entered. She was desirous to see that Nathaniel's physical wants were attended to, but she had also an anxious curiosity about the trial. As the baron lifted himself from the hearth, and Nathaniel transferred the blaze from the brimstone-tipped pine sliver to the candle, she said, —

“How went the trial, Nathaniel?”

“As Roger's enemies had preordained, Mother. They have sent him to Appleby jail.”

“Indeed, I see not how they could have done different. Magistrates must go upon evidence.”

“They sent Asa Bevin there also.”

“Like master, like man. I make no doubt Asa was equally guilty.”

“Roger put human kindness before human prudence; Asa put the law of God before the commands of Judah Parke. I see no other fault in the men.”

“Are you also become a Quaker?”

“I would that my religion were like theirs, — heart-thorough, inside and outside alike. Roger Prideaux is a man who has a perfect heart toward God.”

“A perfect heart!” ejaculated the baron in a low voice. “A perfect heart! Oh, finest of wares!”

“And what is done with the girl? Did she give evidence against her father? If she did, I think nothing of her.”

“She told the truth. She could do no less and be innocent.”

“Faith! When my father was in hiding for Non-conformity, I would have bit out my tongue ere I had made his enemies as wise as myself. I would, surely! Yea, I would have misled them rather than have sent my father to prison, — which, indeed, is mostly the same as a warrant of death.”

“Olivia obeyed the desire of her father. He said to her, ‘Truth can do without a lie. Do not even look one.’ But I have come home in this hurry on our own special business.” Then he repeated what George Fox had told him, and urged upon his father an instant attention to such writing as was necessary to enable him again to act for both.

The baron heard him with a strange restlessness. He rose before Nathaniel’s message was all given, and went to the window and looked into the darksome garden. Lady Kelder’s face reddened with an eager flush, and she answered promptly, —

“For once a Quaker has spoken words with some wisdom in them. You had better leave at dawn, Nathaniel. I have already called Jael, and she will prepare such things as you need. There are still some hours in which you may rest and sleep.”

“Mother, I will leave at once, — unless my father wills to interfere no further in the matter.”

Then the baron turned sharply and said, “I will go to London myself. Joan, dear heart, have my best velvet suit and my flemish laces put up, with such other things as are necessary. I am well able for the journey, and before dawn I can be near to Lancaster.”

“Odinel! Odinel! You shall not leave me. Let Nathaniel go. He did well before. He is quite sufficient.”

“You are unreasonable, Joan. All day you have fretted in your heart at me ; you have made constant moan for Kelderby ; you have wished that you were only a man, that you might say one word to save it. Now, then, have my bag filled ; for I tell you surely that with it, or without it, I will leave Kelderby for London in thirty minutes.”

“Let me go with you, Father.”

“Nay, I will do this thing alone, going in the strength of my God, Nathaniel.”

“Do you wish to go, Father ? ”

“My wish is to stay out of the world, and 't is a cross indeed to face the strife and struggle of it again. But I fear not ; for as I stood by the window I heard with my inward ear the voice I waited for, and it said, ‘*Go. If I send, do I ever fail thee therein ?*’ ”

It was impossible further to gainsay by a word or a look the purpose of the man. With the rapid energy of years past by he began to select such papers as he wanted, and to count out gold for the necessities of the journey. The few words he spoke to Nathaniel about the horse he wished were so curt and positive that Lady Kelder made no more remonstrance. She saw again the masterful leader, the man who in camp or court had always stood for the rights of others, and also held his own. As he impatiently changed his chamber-gown and felt slippers for long jack-boots and a buff leather jerkin, and fastened round his shoulders the heavy cloth cloak that he had worn on many a midnight watch, Lady Kelder caught the spirit of her husband, and she hastened with willing hands the special preparations which fell naturally to her ordering.

So when the horse was brought to the door, and the baron, ready for the journey, stood by his wife's side, say-

ing the bravest and kindest words he could find in his brave, kind heart, she answered them hopefully, keeping back tears, and crowning her kiss with a tender smile. And after all, the hurried parting is the best parting. 'T is doubtful if any one — even lovers — do well to prolong their sweet sorrow. Emotion is weakened by every moment of time it covers, just as water spread over the valley is shallow, but pent in one deep channel becomes a driving force.

Kelder had chosen a fleet hunter to take him the first stage of his journey, and the animal soon carried him beyond the echoes of its beating hoofs. Then Nathaniel and Lady Kelder went back to the parlour and sat down together. She was still under the influence of the baron's heroic mood, and as she sat gazing into the fire her face grew soft and loving and her heart glowed again with the long-forgotten pride she had felt for the husband of her youth.

“Your father has taken us by storm, Nathaniel. For a long time I have not seen him so much like himself. Now, pray resolve me truly if we are like to lose Kelderby. Or think you this journey may be its ransom?”

“I think that my father's journey will save Kelderby.”

“But if it does, then there is this affair of the Quaker Prideaux.”

“My father hath no hand in that.”

“But you have. And what good is it if the fire that is quenched in the chimney be scattered about the floor? Oh, Nathaniel! Nathaniel! if you would be wise and resign a girl who has brought you and is only like to bring trouble. Ill fortune is catching as the small-pox; why should you take trouble from a stranger?”

“Trouble springs not from the ground, Mother, for 'man is born unto trouble, as the sparks fly upward.'”

But why inquire of the future? 'T is like going into a warfare for which no weapon is provided. God is a present help. And 't is easily seen that we have present ills in plenty, without forecasting those not yet here. The ingratitude of our cousin De Burg — ”

“ Is what I expected. Nothing grows old sooner than a kindness.”

“ We have never done aught but good to De Burg, and he has returned us tenfold evil.”

“ Well, then, to every evil-doer his evil day; and as for this Roger Prideaux — ”

“ He is a good man, Mother. But the world likes its own, and Roger is not among the number.”

“ Roger, like others of the trading-class who have been aggrandized by the ruin of better men than themselves, cannot let affairs too high for him alone. He must be patron to Sandys or De Burg, and now he has to eat the husk of their evil speech. And as for this saint, Olivia, she is better than what is either written or called for. Her father is little indebted to her extravagant goodness.”

“ Nothing, not even martyrdom, could prevent Olivia speaking the plain truth. It is a necessity of her nature.”

“ Indeed, I think martyrdom a very poor test of truth. Men suffer half the time, not for their convictions, but to gratify their stubbornness. Nine out of ten would rather yield their lives than their tempers. That is the nature of Englishmen, as 't is the nature of English dogs. Oh! I can tell you, Nathaniel, the Devil lurks often behind the Cross.”

“ Dear mother, as to this world the Quakers get nothing and lose everything.”

“ They get their own way. Is there really anything more gratifying? ”

“ They are truly conscientious.”

“About trivialities, yes, — as to wearing of hats and speaking as no one else does, and the like ; picking up the most insignificant questions with their conscience, instead of their common-sense. That is their righteous way of walking over people’s heads.”

“’T is a way of righteous self-denial.”

“Yes, and they like it. After all, Nathaniel, it is easier to deny sinful-self than righteous-self.”

“We talk to no purpose, Mother, and I am strangely tired.”

Then they both arose and Nathaniel gave her his arm up the dark stairs. He had a candle in one hand, but its faint light only made the thick gloom more visible and portentous. They looked like two figures in a walking sleep, and Jael peeped after them through the partly opened door with the feeling that she was seeing people in a dream.

At the same hour Anastasia sat alone in her chamber, slowly removing the rings and chains and silk and laces that enhanced her splendid beauty. There had been a late supper and much wine-drinking and gambling at De Burg that night, and she had been the gayest in the crowd. She had sung wondrously to her lute ; she had danced a *galliard* with Le Tall ; she had played cribbage, and won gold pieces at it ; she had queened it over every heart, and charmed even her father out of his present mood of anger. But she was now alone, and she was really miserable.

“I am the greatest fool in the three kingdoms,” she said bitterly, as she put the mirror at a proper angle and sat down before it. “Beauty ! Yes, I have beauty, but what is it worth ? Do I care if Le Tall and Chenage fight a duel about me ? Nathaniel scorns me, and any-

thing else is beyond expectation. Well, what I cannot have I will be dog enough to hinder Mistress Prideaux of, — if I can. But now that I have raised the storm, shall I be able to manage it? I have already in its ordering lied myself neck-deep, and one lie breeds more, and black lies have crimson fruit. Chut! My heart surely hath the bravery to perfect its own wishes, and my little tongue never failed me yet." And she put its scarlet tip out and looked at it steadily. "'T is as good as a sword, if one knows how to use it."

Then she unlatched her shoes of red morocco, and took the pins out of her black hair, and let its waving, curling mass fall over her shoulders and bosom. The particularly picturesque disorder it assumed arrested her attention. She studied its forms for future use, and passed a ten minutes in fingering and recurling her favourite lock. Then, noticing a number of gold pieces lying loose upon the table, she counted and put them away. They had been won from Chenage; she recalled the gleam of anger in his eyes as he paid the debt of ill chance, and she laughed softly as she dropped the money in its place.

"He thought I cheated him! Faith! I am in the selfsame mind. There is a big bill running up between Chenage and me. Shall I be forced to pay it? or will he be forced to lose it?" She rose with the query, opened a drawer, and took from it a pack of cards. With a slow intentness she shuffled them hither and thither, set some aside, and cast out others. Then she spread the others before her, and began to spell out their mysteries.

"Chenage is black with anger; he carries the trey of spades, and the nine follows him. He has a villain heart, and I'll swear to it! What is this? Prison bars,

and a great change, and news from beyond seas, — and tears in my own breast. That last is a lie, if all else be true. I am well used to jade Fortune's tricks, and fear none of them." Yet she flung the paper oracles at her feet, and went to bed with the shadow of her own evil divination over her.

But her sleep was not troubled by the ill fortune she had spelled out in her divining cards. Indeed, she was of that class of mortals whose sleep is the sleep of pure matter, and who are very rarely visited by the winged dreams. If her soul ever wandered afar on its own business or pleasure, she knew it not. It told her nothing of what it saw. It gave her neither warning nor admonition. She shut her eyes as a tired animal does, and thought nothing of the breathing mystery behind her unconscious rest.

She awoke with the influence of the previous day upon her. The triumphs of the trial with its swift after-thought of worry and fear; the feasting and dancing and gambling; the sense of her father's deferred wrath; the sense of Le Tall's half-scornful admiration, and of the almost savage earnestness of Chenage's love and anger, — these things and their various smaller aids struck her consciousness the moment it was awake to mortal questions. They did not daunt her. The bright June sunshine flooded the bed, and in its glory she lay in indolent satisfaction, gathering together the tangled ends of her affairs, and looking at them steadily in their very worst aspects.

For every day has its genius, and the genius of this day was of an anxious questioning bent. It would not suffer her to be still, so she slipped out of bed and began the business of her toilet, keeping, by unconscious preference, in the very brightest band of sunshine. And

as she splashed the cold water over her arms and face and bosom, and brushed out her tangled curls, she was busy enough with plans and projects of safety and revenge, yet not so busy as to make her negligent about her personal adornment.

Thoughts troublesome to any woman — angry, jealous thoughts — went to and fro in her mind, threatening, supposing, longing, and fearing; but they did not prevent her studying the effect of her broidered hose and scarlet shoes, and putting her pretty feet in every position that gave her a good view of them. She was burning with indignation at Nathaniel, she was full of scorn for Olivia, she was sick at heart whenever she thought of Chenage; but amid the tumult of such cross and vexed passions she found time and interest to try on several petticoats before she decided that the pale blue one would show off best the snowy sweep of her long white tunic. Only a woman in such a storm of anxious feeling could have so deliberately arranged each curl and plait, pinched each ruffle of point afresh, turned every crumpled bow, studied before the mirror the flow of her garments and the exact length of step they required, and yet throughout each trivial act considered with a conscious method the best way to keep herself out of the sorrow and ruin she would gladly work for others.

When her toilet was completed, she went slowly down the stairway. With her hand upon the thick, black balustrade, step by step, she went down. There was a long, richly painted window behind her; and she moved in the glory of its many-tinted lights, knowing well how fair her white-robed figure, with its touches of red and blue, looked in that dim splendour of changeful colour. She lingered because she hoped that Le Tall or Chenage might pass through the hall and see her;

for so contradictory is a woman's vanity, that, even when a man is troublesomely in love, she cannot resist the opportunity to make him still more so.

However, she found the house empty of all company. Le Tall and Chenage had gone away immediately after breakfast, and De Burg had betaken himself to the meadows to watch the haymakers.

"'T is a moment's peace, and I thank my stars for it," she said cheerily to the steward. "I will have a breakfast to my mind, Martin, — a rustical breakfast fit for a dairymaid. Bring me fresh eggs, and new milk, and the manchet loaf of wheat flour, and a plate of cherries; and, Martin, I will have the milk in the china bowl tipped with silver, that hath the Virgin and the Child at the bottom of it. And bring me a napkin of fine diaper, and put that posy of honeysuckles near by me. Faith! I shall taste the flowers in my milk." And Martin, who delighted in serving this handsome, well-dressed, imperiously pleasant mistress, brought all she wished, with a hasty officiousness that bespoke his willing service.

"What time was breakfast served, Martin?"

"An hour after sunrising, Mistress, — and great discontent at your absence shown."

"Who was discontented, Martin?" She was chipping the tip of an egg with the greatest deliberation; and her smile was so ravishing that if Martin had had to break every commandment to answer her, he must needs have pleased himself and have done it.

"'T was Squire Chenage the most, — and the other gentleman also; and the master grumbling for himself and all."

"That was like to be. And pray what did they break their fast on?"

“I served some ribs of cold roast beef, and a dish of buttered salmon, and each a bottle of sack; also, the wormwood wine at the first of all.”

“They would need the wormwood. I bless myself that I was absent from the discontented gentlemen, for I dearly love a simple meal, Martin. Faith! I think I have the innocent tastes of a child yet. Cherries and milk are my delight.” And she lifted admiringly a bunch of the crimson drupes, and laid them with anticipative enjoyment against her crimson lips.

On the whole she had a pleasant meal; and when it was over she found herself able to face the day, — nay, rather anxious for such encounters as it might bring her. But nothing followed on her “Come what may, I am ready for it.” Fate was out of hearing, and her challenge was for some hours unanswered. She found it difficult to fill them to her satisfaction. To be alone, that was a condition of *ennui* and weariness to her. She tried playing shuttlecock; but there was no one to see her pretty attitudes, and it disarranged her dress. Then she practised the new French step taught her the previous night by Le Tall; and as she watched her scarlet shoes playing hide-and-seek behind and before her petticoat, she bethought her of Sir John Suckling’s ballad, and so, quoting it, made the words keep the rhythm of her motions: —

“Her feet beneath her petticoat
Like little mice stole in and out,
As if they feared the light;
But, oh! she dances such a way,
No sun upon an Easter day
Is half so fine a sight!”

In a little while she wearied of her dancing, and took a book. But having no liking for reading, and the volume

lifted proving to be Alsted's "Encyclopædia," she soon laid it down with the impatient comment, —

"'T is the veriest nonsense, I believe. If the bell has any sides, the clapper will find them; and if there was any savour of sense in the book, 't is to be believed I should hit upon something worth the reading."

Then she took her finery and her pretty, gracious ways to the housekeeper, and asked what sweet waters were making in the still-room, and discoursed about the excellence of elderflower pomade for the skin, and even condescended to inquire as to the dishes for the day's dinner.

But all this was but a trifling with Fate, and exceedingly unsatisfactory. She had set herself to a certain high mental pitch, anticipating a battle royal with her father, and possibly with Chenage; and she felt that there was an unfortunate want of communication between her mood and its objects. As the morning and the long, hot afternoon crept slowly away, her spirit flagged; she grew fearful in the crowding thoughts that assailed her, — she began to feel as if something were going to happen.

It was night, however, before the slightest change came. She had taken dinner, and was lying on a sofa, idly touching the strings of her lute. A song, "To the Virgins, to make much of Time," with the notes attached, was beside her; and she was singing it with a very listless air, —

"Gather ye rosebuds while ye may,
Old Time is still a-flying;
And this same flower, that smiles to-day,
To-morrow will be dying."

De Burg entered at the third line. He was rating the servant who followed him about some household neglect, and he continued the occupation while the man

took off his heavy riding-boots and clasped on his feet shoes of more light and easy make. He did not notice Anastasia; and she continued her melancholy song, but with such a nervous hand that at the word "dying" a string snapped with a sharpness that had something ominous in it. Then she laid down the lute, rose from the sofa, and arranged her skirts with such elaborate care that the petty interest irritated De Burg; and he broke in two a brutal epithet he was bestowing upon the servant, in order to turn round and say, —

"Shake your bravery less, Mistress; you set my teeth on edge."

She answered him by a shrug of her shoulders, and an inquiring stare which he felt but would not see. Then softly humming the refrain of her interrupted ditty, she went hither and thither in the darksome room; shutting a casement, putting the encyclopædia in its place, re-arranging the honeysuckles in their bowl, — aggravatingly indifferent to all but the trifles that caught her passing glance, and quite conscious that the trailing of her silk and lawn, and the unconcerned meaningless repetition of "Gather-ye-rose-buds — Gather-ye-rose-buds — Gather-ye-rose-buds," was exasperating her father to the highest degree.

"Light the candles, Jock."

The man was leaving the room, but he turned back to obey her command; and in the interval she walked about with her hands clasped behind her back, and her head lifted high to the thoughts gradually gathering passion in her angry, fearful heart. But she still hid all emotion in fitful bars of the same mournful melody: "To-morrow-will-be-dying — To-morrow-will-be-dying — To —"

The closing of the door broke the word in two, and

the sharp clash was followed in a moment by an order just as sharp: —

“Come here, Asia!”

She went toward him, and stood by the small table holding the two candles. One of her hands rested on it; she was erect and watchful, yet withal conscious of that unconquerable fear which is the result of a lifelong habit of obedience, founded upon traditions of absolute right.

“Asia! you have brewed a pretty kettle of broth for me. I shall need the Devil's spoon to sup it with.”

“He is always willing to lend it.”

“To a woman, yes. But I am not going to sup the broth. No, in faith! They who brewed may borrow. I tell you, Kendal is in a fever of discontent about yesterday's work.”

“The Kendal Quakers, you mean?”

“I mean such men as young Strickland, who holds Quakers and Puritans and Royalists, all of them, at his word. He met me in Stricklandgate this afternoon, and refused me his hand on this business. He said, moreover, that I had been false to my kindred, and false to my king, and false to my honour; and that he would prove every charge at his sword's point. And listen, Mistress! Captain Bellingham stood by him! Heaven and hell!” he shouted, as he rose and stamped his foot to the adjuration, “I'll strangle both; yes, both of them with their own blood.”

“Playing ‘Pistol’ won't mend matters, sir. Try to understand yourself, and be reasonable. 'Tis beyond doubt you have been false to Kelder, and intend yet more of the same business. 'Tis beyond doubt that men will say you wrong your own honour in wronging Kelder's surety for it; but wherein you have been false

to the king, I see not. On that quarrel you may stand firmly."

"Oh, indeed! You see with one eye, and I was so great a fool as to let you see for me. The main count of Strickland's charge is, that I have been a traitor to King Charles in that I interfered with his messenger."

"'T was against Prideaux, and not against Sandys, you moved. A fine thing when nobles like Strickland stand up for Quakers!"

"Confusion to it all! See you not that if Sandys went to Penrith, he went there only to see one great lord, who must now lie under still heavier suspicions. And Prideaux, though a Quaker serving the king's purpose, is a loyal man in Strickland's eyes. He said plainly to me that an injury to men doing the king's work secretly was a wrong to the king beyond pardon. Fool! fool! I never thought of the matter in that light. And 't was a beggarly return to Kelder for his kindness, — all to serve a woman's jealous spite. Fool! fool! fool!"

"You know best what name fits you, sir; but 't was not specially to serve my spite. 'T was because you had not humility to say, 'Thank you very kindly, sir,' to your cousin Kelder; and because you grudged Sandys to the Quaker Prideaux, and hoped to work him out of the estate, and so make room for De Burg. Pray be so far honest with me. I shall think no worse of you for it."

"As to Harald Sandys, 't was the most unfortunate of names."

"Then they think surely it was Sandys?"

"They would swear it, for 't is their desire. Sandys and Strickland have been friends for generations, and Bellingham has with Sandys still closer ties. See you not, then, how I have offended them both in their personal and political affections? And who would care

to live in Kendal with Strickland and Bellingham for enemies? As well live in Rome, and strive with the Pope."

"Tell them the truth, if you think it needful."

"Tell them that an honourable name like Sandys was used to shield a villain like John! They would either of them stab me with the words in my mouth; and, by my soul! 't would serve me right."

He was walking the floor in a fury of distracted passions, and Anastasia, white with physical terror, watched him with a sense of hopelessness of which she had never before been conscious. What could she do or say to undo what she had said and done? Nothing. And as for all her personal enchantments, in that hour she learned how impotent they were against the impregnable principles of honour and gratitude and inflexible justice. The defection of Bellingham smote her on every side. She had believed her influence over him to be absolute. She could scarcely credit his desertion until she remembered that he had not called to see her after he heard of Prideaux's prosecution. She feared Chenage; she liked the gay-hearted Bellingham, and had always regarded him as the final resort if her circumstances became beyond her own management. To lose his love was to lose her anchor; she had the sense of drifting on stormy waves, rolling hither and thither to the passionate bluster of De Burg's anger and mortification.

"Only one course is now left, Asia."

"To go to the king?"

"Yes."

"I am ready at any hour."

"You? It is impossible now to take you."

She turned as if she had been suddenly struck, her face expressing the same anger and astonishment.

“What then?”

“You must marry Chenage.”

“I — will — not!”

“You will! And that with all convenient speed.”

A shrill cry smote her lips apart. “Father! father! hear me!”

“I have heard you to my ruin.”

“Let me go with you. I will bear anything, everything.” She stepped to his side and laid her head against his breast. Her distress was real and he felt it; but he had no comfort to give her. Not unkindly, but with a positive firmness, he withdrew himself from her embrace.

“Asia, meet your fate like a brave woman. You have called it unto you.”

“Let me at least have the reasons for my fate. Good God! how careless you are of my happiness.”

“Let me tell you, when you bartered your happiness for revenge ’t was your own bargain. This considered, shall I care for what you are reckless of?”

“Anything but Chenage! I fear him. I fear that gray, lonely house among the mountains. Oh, father! I have seen my misery in his eyes. Spare me!”

“There is no other way. I must abroad at the first hour. Where am I to get the gold? Only from Chenage. I owe him much already, and he is willing to cancel all, willing to give me two hundred pounds for my expenses the day you are his wife. Fix that day now. ’T is the only favour I can grant you.”

“I will not be so cruel to myself. Father! dear father!”

“You cannot kiss me out of concessions, Anastasia. The only way to save De Burg is to be before Strickland. When the king comes to his own he will have so

many to right that any excuse will serve to pass some of the many by. A word from Strickland and he would take my rights, to right some other man."

"Sell the plate, — sell all my jewels."

"Tell all and sundry that I am going? Set old and young Kelder to watch my movements, and have me put under lock and key? Asia, you brewed this cup, drink as you have brewed. Chenage is as fine a gentleman as England breeds. He is rich and he loves you, and faith! you have often lead him to believe that you returned his love. If you play with fire do not wonder if you get burnt."

"I shall do my best to make him wretched."

"If you try that game with Chenage you will get beat at it. I thought it was he that was to make you wretched. To say truth, 't will be six for him, and half a dozen for you."

"I will run away from him, and come to you."

There was an inquiry in her eyes which De Burg could not meet. It said so plainly, "If I do, will you shelter me?" He turned to the sideboard, poured out a glass of French spirits and drank it. A few minutes of silence followed. Anastasia went to the sofa and sat down. The hopeless droop of her handsome head was but the outward sign of a far more terrible hopelessness of heart. There are possibilities for women in these days that were impossibilities two hundred years ago. Marriage was then a final act; no one regarded any divorce but that of death as either practical or potential. Flight in any direction, or for any purpose, was accompanied by dangers so various that an ordinary spirit could not contemplate it without despair. Public opinion was absolutely on the side of the worst husband. Whether the marriage ring was a chain or an ornament, society de-

manded from a woman all the obedience to its obligations which was promised by the very act of wearing it.

These thoughts, and many like them, passed through Anastasia's mind with the rapidity and vividness of a flash of lightning ; and they had, as a sad accompaniment, her keen disappointment of the contemplated change. She had looked forward to the merry doings of that shabby little court in Paris with such anticipations of triumph. In her secret heart she had even planned the captivation of the laughing, quaffing, carelessly good-natured monarch. Were all her delightful day-dreams to end in Squire Chenage and his great sorrowful-looking house? Desperate as the circumstances environing her were, she was resolved not to submit to them if it were possible to escape a lot so repugnant and so final.

De Burg waited for her to speak. He was determined not to weaken his ultimatum with many words. "Fix the day, and fix it at the earliest possible date," was all that he would say. His sulky silence, if she had known it, was the sign of the white feather, of a certain pity for the beautiful girl whom he was dooming to a life so hateful and hopeless to her. He felt that if he any longer permitted her to weep and plead he must in some measure give way, and so he retreated into the fortress of a sulky silence. But Anastasia was not one who looked below the surface for a motive. Her father's silence she took for the evidence of an inflexible resolution.

"Let me have this night, Father. I commonly think in the night. Then, if I see your plan to be the best, I will take it of you, and let my own hopes go in God's name."

She spoke in a low, tearful voice, and he could not resist her request, though he was obliged to speak gruffly in order to keep his position intact.

“I’ll warrant you’ll come to your senses before morning, Asia. Chenage is as good a gentleman as lives, and his offer is to my great contentment. If you fall a-crying now, you shall have the room to yourself. Peace, I say!”

She shut the parlour door with a passionate force behind her, and fled like a frightened child up the dim stairway to her room. She had a quick thought of the Anastasia that passed slowly down it in the morning sunshine, and a quick pity for the Anastasia hurrying through its shadows at night, pursued by a fate pitiless and hateful which she knew would overtake her. With trembling haste she drew the large iron bolt across her own door; but she could not shut out the terror which was in her heart. For a moment she stood in the scarcely lighted room panting like a hunted creature; then she lighted several candles from the burning rush-light, and sat down somewhat quieted by the act.

With angry vehemence she tossed aside the white robe and blue-silk petticoat. “I will never wear them again,” she muttered. “They are full of ill luck, they are the colours of disappointment and misfortune to me. If this is the world, would I were out of it! If Chenage will have me, he shall rue it. Faith! I’ll make him wish he had never seen me. My only amusement will be to torture him. Ah, the wretched life! I wish—I wish—I wish that John would come! John would not see me wronged!”

She had been rapidly undressing to these ejaculations. The freedom given to her body seemed in some way to enlarge her mind. John’s name gave her a new hope. She was now half scornful of her own submission. She thought of twenty arguments she might have used against her father’s plan. Before the mirror she looked at her-

self and pitied the fate of her youth and beauty ; but as she passed her fingers through her long curls, the new hope gradually took clearness and form in her mind.

In the hurry of their parting at Sandys John had certainly said something about "coming back to see her in a month." Yes, she remembered the word "month." At the time the promise had not appeared to her desirable ; she had passed it by with a passing assent. Now she rigidly inquired of memory for it. She endeavoured to recall the tone in which it was made, the expression of John's face, the particular sentences before and following it ; and her final conclusion was that John certainly intended to visit her very soon.

She could understand that his curiosity would lead him to do so. Filling his life with great and shameful tragedies, John de Burg had nevertheless that small kind of soul which is inquisitive about petty affairs. Without reflecting on the peculiarity, Anastasia knew that it existed. She knew all his small hatreds, his scornful toleration of Prideaux, his real admiration of Olivia, his jealousy of Nathaniel ; she imagined the laughter and delight they would have together over the trial and sentence of Prideaux and Asa ; and she came to the positive belief that within three weeks, perhaps two, John would certainly venture to meet her somewhere. Well, then, delay was all she needed.

"I 'll go with John. Yes, I 'll go with John, if he were a thousand times an outlaw, rather than with Chenage to that gloomy prison of his. But it will need management."

By "management" she meant deception. She had not that brutal courage which attains its ends by a physical storming of whatever contradicts. She preferred to cozen and smile and allure. Chenage was inclined to be suspicious and jealous ; she would accept him with an

appearance of grateful pleasure. She would tell him she loved him for his kindness to her father. She would fool him to the top of his bent, but she would also put off to the last possible moment the hateful ceremony which would make him lord and master, and her the obedient or rebellious slave of his wishes; and, to the last moment, she would hope and watch for John.

After a little silence she went further, though it was at first with fear and uncertainty. "And if John should *not* come in time, John will find out where I am. He will come and see me, or he will send. I know the man he will send, — Pastro; I can see his short, black, curling hair, his flat cap and ear-rings, his red, thick bull's neck, his dark skin, his sailorly roll. He'll hang round till he sees me; and John won't be far off. And if I am unhappy — and I know I shall be unhappy — I shall tell John; or — or — or *Chenage might have an invitation to go with John.*"

Her face flushed, her eyes danced with delight. She flung herself upon the bed to luxuriate in such a delectable scheme of revenge. Every now and then she laughed softly to her pillow. She might have to be gracious and humble for a little while, but oh, the rapture, the delirious rapture of her revenge!

"And I shall not blame myself," she murmured complacently; "'t will be his own fault. He has lent father money purposely for this end. Neither will I blame father. I warrant he thinks he gets me cheap at a few hundred pounds. A dear wife I will be to him! Oh, Roger Chenage! Roger Chenage! You shall find out how sharp are a woman's secret teeth."

In a couple of hours she had quite accepted the situation; nay, she even felt a wicked exultation in it. Nor must we blame her beyond reason. The women of

every age are in a measure what the age makes them. Cromwell's age was an heroic one; everything, good or bad, took on large proportions. The good women had opportunities for amazing faith, for great self-denial and magnanimous deeds; the evil women were driven by the same circumstances into vast oppositions. They did, and they suffered, gigantic wrongs; and they had all the facilities for outrageous revenges. Betrayed confidences could send men to prison or to the scaffold, a little sinful gold sell them into hopeless slavery, a planned jealousy deliver them to be spitted on a rival's sword. Anastasia, looking at her wrongs in the light of her own time, saw how she might rid herself of an unwelcome husband; kidnapping, slavery, death,—these were her weapons. Had she lived A. D. 1890, she would have simply gone to the divorce court.

After she had come to a firm and clear decision she went to sleep. The thought of murder was in her heart, but she called it revenge, and it did not trouble her. Besides, she had also made an agreement with herself that if Chenage behaved properly to her father and to herself she would do him no physical harm. In that case, if she found life intolerable at Chenage Grange,—and she was sure it would be so,—she would go with John, and Chenage would only have to fume a little over his runaway bride.

He was that night in Kendal waiting for Anastasia's decision. De Burg had promised him it in the morning. And he occupied the room in the Crown Inn which Nathaniel had occupied two nights previously. Oh, the secrets that the four walls of a room keep! Prayer, and anxious loving thoughts, and talks with conscience, and calm virtuous sleep,—that was the record Nathaniel Kelder left on them. Chenage was under the influence of a

brutal and selfish passion. His mutterings were full of hatred of De Burg. He grudged the money he had loaned; he was trying to invent some plan by which he could evade the payment of the further sum promised. When he thought especially of Anastasia it was with mingled curses on her power over him and ejaculations on her beauty. He made himself great promises of the revenges he would take for all the heart-torment she had given him and all the money she had cost him. Was this record also written there? Oh, changing guests of inns and homes! —

“ May not the ancient room you sit in dwell
 In separate loving souls, for joy or pain?
 Nay, all its corners may be painted plain
 Where heaven shows pictures of some life spent well,
 Or may be stamped — a memory, all in vain —
 Upon the sight of lidless eyes in hell.”

The morning was a dull, rainy one. It broke austerely. The wind lashed the boughs of the trees and gave them a doleful aspect, and the very sky seemed flattened under the pouring rain which drowned the horizon. But Anastasia was not affected by atmospheric influence; she had a vague passing pity for the cows browsing in the wet grass of the distant meadows, but she turned from the window to the mirror with a mind perfectly settled on her own affairs. Rain or shine, she knew the way she was going, and at the moment when she put her bare feet upon the polished oak of the floor she began to take it.

She dressed a trifle more carelessly than usual. She was not going to give herself any particular trouble about Roger Chenage. Her sacrifice was granted, but why deck it with pink bows? Otherwise there was no difference in her appearance. She met her father with a

smile, and De Burg was grateful for it. He looked haggard and weary, for he had really passed an anxious and sleepless night. Truly, he wanted his own way, but he wanted it without serious pain to Anastasia; so her smile was better than sunshine to him. He kissed her voluntarily, — a favour so unusual that it made her cheeks flame with pleasure. She felt at that moment as if it would be a joy to use Chenage in any way necessary for the welfare of De Burg.

De Burg read her like a printed page. He perceived that in her present mood he might resign everything in order to gain everything; and, as he anticipated, she refused to accept this surrender,

“’T is not to be thought of,” she answered. “I shall manage Chenage to my own purposes very well, Father; and if he mistreat me, I warrant he will do so at his own peril. My only affliction is that I must lose you.”

“’T will not be for long, Asia. I may promise you so much.”

“And when the king comes home you will be with him; and you will send for me to London, and I shall see the new Spring Garden, and disport myself at the court masques and balls.”

“You shall, surely! You have been kind and obedient to me, Asia. When Chenage comes this morning, give him the earliest day for my sake.”

“A month hence?”

“Do you dream? A week hence is too late.”

“’T is impossible! And surely you have some arrangements to make; money is but the first. What conveyance have you to the coast?”

“My own horse will take me to Whitehaven bravely.”

“It will not carry you across seas.”

“Le Tall has a friend, whose ship is now unloading

at Whitehaven, from the Barbadoes. It waits for me, and will go so far out of its course as to drop me upon French soil. And if I forget you for an hour, Asia, 't will be against my will; though for the present I must content myself with the belief that Chenage has a distracting love for you."

"The ways of love are many. Chenage will vow you black and blue that his is one of them. It will pass at that!" And she shrugged her shoulders with a scorn that words would vainly have tried to express.

"He hath a good name also. Le Tall said to me but yesterday that no merry party would willingly want him."

"I 'll warrant it so. Few men care to show their private faces in public."

"And 't is a common report, among those who profess to know, that Old Noll hath not many days to live. Then we may hope —"

"I will none of Hope! She is an old gypsy, forever prophesying lies. She told me I was to go to Paris with you, and then fled away before Necessity, who sends me to Chenage, without an 'ah!' or 'oh!' or 'how!' about it."

"'T is all contrary to my desire. Chenage will be here anon; I will leave you to take care of your own affairs."

"Have no fear. He shall take care of yours also. 'T is not my nature to put my father at the feet of any other man."

He was really too troubled to answer; but Anastasia understood his set white face and drooping head; and when his misty eyes flashed one look at her, they touched the girl deeper than Chenage might ever hope to do. She even found a kind of pleasure in the thought

that she might use Chenage to ransom her father's honour and fortune. And yet 't was but a poor pleasure, leaving behind it a bitter sense of wrong to her own life and hopes.

After De Burg left the room, it seemed inexpressibly dreary; and as she walked restlessly about it, a Hindu idol, upon a shelf filled with Asiatic curiosities, attracted her attention, — such a melancholy, hideous, dropsied, gloomy god, simian and obscene, with half-closed eyes and sempiternal smile! She stood musingly before it.

“ 'T is said that mostly women pray to it. What misery women do endure! for where that horror is the likeness of a god, conceive me what the men may be! Certainly Chenage is something better, or 't is to be hoped so. And if Chenage is my fate, I will not cross destiny, for 't is to cross my luck. But, oh, the bitterness of it! Chenage, whom I have mocked and despised! Chenage, whom I have vowed never to marry! Chenage, of all men, to open the door of my future home! 'T is beyond belief! 'T is beyond endurance!”

But Anastasia was only experiencing one of those contradictions of fortune which in all ages have been a lament. Can any man or woman say, “I will not enter a certain dwelling”? The swift changes of life may bring them to its threshold, may push them in, and they not even dream of escaping. Therefore the wise defile not any well, because they may yet have to drink of its water.

X.

A MEETING.

“O sad bride, feigning to be what thou art not! veiling with smiles thy fears of wrong, thy dreams of quick vengeance.”

“All strangest things the multitudinous years
Bring forth, and shadow from us all we know;
Falter alike great oath and steeled resolve,
And none shall say of aught, ‘This may not be.’”

JENIFER WARING was a woman of sorrowful spirit, — one who never sunned herself on the mountain-tops of her faith. Though her Bible told her that “the earth is full of the goodness of the Lord,” she preferred to think of Jehovah as a niggardly dispenser of happiness, delighting to feed his people with the bread and water of affliction. So she looked with distrust on the happy confidence which enabled Olivia to stay her heart on God. These were days of great spiritual warfare, and she herself was thankful if she might only dip her parched corn in the vinegar. How, then, should a child like Olivia have the banqueting-house and the banner of Love over her?

For Olivia’s soul was a garden, Jenifer’s a lonely, complaining place; and she wondered how Olivia, resting on the Lord to do all things well, could not only quiet her heart in that assurance, but also keep her tongue from reproaching those who had done her wrong. Jenifer wished to discuss all the circumstances which had brought Roger Prideaux into trouble, and her womanly

instincts told her that there had been something between Anastasia and Olivia which the examination in Kendal had not reached. She judged it concerned Nathaniel Kelder; and she enjoyed a love affair, if it did not run straight and found plenty of crosses on its crooked road. But about personal matters Olivia was exceedingly reticent; and reticence between women is an attitude capable of causing great heart-burning.

Olivia, then, did not satisfy her protector's hopes. She had looked forward to weeping with her, — to a luxury of spiritual and earthly complaining which would have been better than singing to Jenifer. But Olivia's serenity and guarded speech gave her no such opportunities. She also took some credit to herself for the open confession of her opinions involved in her kindness, especially as she had decidedly crossed the wish of her more prudent husband in order to make it. Herein, doubtless, lay her compensation; for Justice Waring was a masterful man at home. But this was an occasion of self-assertion which could be grounded upon conscience, and the strictest domestic martinets generally find themselves unable to face a woman crossing their orders "for conscience' sake."

And Jenifer recalled frequently, and with pleasure, the face of her husband when he saw his coach standing at the door of the Town Hall, and heard her say that she thought it her "duty to take charge of the young daughter of Roger Prideaux." He had not dared to oppose her, lest he should be publicly resisted. Jenifer smiled when she thought of that moment.

Besides, she would have the pleasure of telling George Fox what she had done. For she gave to Fox that reverent admiration which women give to men who are lords of themselves and others, — that pure feminine

admiration, having in it no element of sin, because given to attributes, and only affecting the individual as the representative and interpreter of them.

It was on the morning of the fourth day after the trial that Nathaniel came for Olivia, and about noon she was ready to depart. Justice Waring's house was on the main street; but the shopkeepers were mostly in their parlours eating their dinners, and the Strickland-gate was as quiet as if it were the noon of night instead of day. Nathaniel was by the open coach, with his handsome face lifted to the door of the house; for on the topmost step of the flight leading to it Mistress Waring stood, holding Olivia's hand. They made a picture worth taking into the memory, — the large, comely, richly dressed matron, and the slight, fair girl with her composed manner and innocent face. Her white sarcenet hood made a soft radiance round it, and the sombre plainness of her dress received an air of freshness and sweetness from the roses and mignonette she carried in her hand.

There was a silk-mercier's shop adjoining the Warings' house; and as Mistress Waring stood holding Olivia's hand, and Nathaniel stood smiling and watching them, the shop door tinkled sharply, and Roger Chenage and Anastasia de Burg came out together. Anastasia had been choosing her wedding dress, and was in a temper of scoffing mirth; while Chenage, in a sulky admiration, was trying to understand her.

Just at that moment the bells began a noon-day chime, and Chenage made some reference to their wedding peal. She looked at him with contempt, and tossing her head saucily, answered, —

“A wedding peal! Nay, we will have a noise of trumpets; or, better still, the butchers shall ring us

a triple major with their knives and cleavers. Sure I have heard that when the king brought home his queen, the London butchers on Ludgate Hill made a pretty enough music so. I swear we will have the butchers."

"Take a care, Mistress. You are going beyond my understanding."

"'T would be no hard thing to do that;" and then suddenly both her feet and her tongue received a momentary check. She saw the little tableau at Justice Waring's door, and by a glance directed the attention of Chenage to it. The sight infuriated Anastasia, and she believed it had been deliberately planned for her mortification. Yet, with a bitter laugh, she advised Chenage to study the devotion of the Puritan lover.

Chenage defended himself with a sullen justice. "When will you look at me as that girl looks at Kelder?" he asked. "By my soul! a man could catch love from her eyes."

He was swinging his feathered hat angrily, and trying to carry his finery with the air of one who knew sword and buckler; but it was hard work with Anastasia's cold eyes upon him and her sneering words in his ears.

"Fortune is a jade!" she cried; "an ill jade, or she had given me a Puritan lover. How I should adore one! How becoming is their dress! How refined and gentle their manners! They do not dice, nor drink, nor dance. Loving is their only vice, and I vow they love to perfection! That man touches the girl as if she were the Virgin Mary. He speaks to her as if he said, 'Your Majesty.' Ah me! I would I had a Puritan lover."

She looked in his face so directly and with such glinting eyes that he knew not whether she was in jest or in

earnest ; in fact, she knew not herself which of the passions rioting in her heart was chief over the rest. In a few moments the coach overtook them, passed them, and so went slowly out of sight. It was open to the sunshine and the breeze, and Olivia was its sole occupant. She sat in it like a child, with the same air of simplicity and unconsciousness. Nathaniel rode his own horse, guiding it (as Anastasia noticed) so close to Olivia's side that he could bend low enough to catch her conversation.

Olivia looked not to the right or the left ; but she received in some momentary glance the knowledge that it was Chenage and Anastasia she was passing. Eyes raining evil influence were upon her ; but her will of goodness was equal to Anastasia's will of wickedness, and she would not turn her face to the handsome one regarding her with such malignant authority. Nathaniel, on the contrary, looked steadfastly at the couple, and the haughty, passionate girl felt the quick pang of his penetrating, reproachful glance. She threw her head a little backward, and lifted her flowing skirt to exhibit her spangled shoes, — for she was wearing her most splendid clothes, having determined during the interval of courtship to make Chenage visit her mercer and her tailor to abundant advantage. She glittered in silk and silver and gems ; she moved to the nodding of plumes, and waving of lace, and flaunting of ribbons ; and the fresh wind caught from her fluttering trappings the waft of lavender and precious Eastern scents. A few years later Nathaniel wondered if John Milton had been in Kendal that day, and he smiled as he opened the "Samson Agonistes" and read that question in it which so perfectly described the girl.

"But who is this? What thing of sea or land?
Female of sex it seems,

That so bedecked, ornate, and gay,
 Comes this way, sailing
 Like a stately ship
 Of Tarsus, bound for the isles
 Of Javan or Gadire,
 With all her bravery on and tackle trim,
 Sails filled, and streamers waving,
 Courted by all the winds that hold them play,
 An amber scent of odorous perfume
 Her harbinger."

Yet this picture, vivid as it was, took but a moment to impress itself, and even shared that moment with its companion picture, — an equally bedizened man, his hair in long scented curls, his feathered beaver swinging in his hand, and his large brown face turned with insolent and sullen anger upon the young girl in the coach and the young man riding at her side.

"I shall go mad with the insolence of that fellow," he said; for he was not oblivious of Nathaniel's glance, nor yet of the power it had over Anastasia; and as he uttered the words he dashed his beaver passionately against his right knee.

"Then you may go mad without my help. I am indifferent to the disagreeable creatures."

"I will pistol him before your face if I see your eyes on him again."

"Are you so far gone in jealousy? Ha! ha! Is your neck clothed with thunder? Do you commonly drink brandy and gunpowder, sir? Let me tell you Nathaniel Kelder hath brave blood in every vein, and it is not your hand will ever let it."

"It seemeth to me that he ought to be in my place."

"As I am convinced that you love me, I will own that he would be even more disagreeable. I have but a slim chance of ruling you. I should be a slave under Nat Kelder's will."

“Nay, then, Anastasia, you may rule me to your heart’s content, I am so far gone with you. Thank your stars, my girl, that fortune has given you a husband so much your slave.”

But she was far from being thankful. She was sullen and ill-natured, and indulged herself in such sarcastic speeches as made her lover explode with laughter and burn with indignation at the same moment. They called this wooing, and bandied their veiled words backward and forward with smiles and stolen kisses; but in his heart Chenage was promising himself a full indemnity after marriage, and Anastasia’s eyes saw coming toward her the swift-winged ship which would bring her a perfect satisfaction and a perfect freedom. So ready a creditor is the future to the dissatisfied. It promises anything, everything; it willingly accepts mortgage after mortgage upon its unrealized happiness, and then, with sudden calamity or slow, agonizing delays, forecloses on life, and turns the bankrupt heart out of home and out of hope.

At the same time Olivia and Nathaniel went slowly through the scented lanes between Kendal and Sandys. They were in no hurry. Nathaniel dismounted to gather her some bluebells, and having done so he hung his bridle over his arm and walked by the side of the coach. They talked in that low voice which lovers naturally choose, and yet their matter of conversation was nothing to such special purpose. But Love has all things, all words, all looks, all motions for his own. He can vow affection without a word, and give everything in the transfer of a glance.

To Nathaniel and Olivia it was a charmed journey. The slow rumbling of the wheels in the wagon ruts, the ring of the whetstone sharpening the haymakers’ scythes, the call of the crake in the meadows, the never-ceasing murmur of running water, — all these sim-

ple sounds made distinct impressions, and yet blended with their own whispered speech as perfectly as if Nature was composing a piece for six voices, and doing it with that delightful perfection of imperfection which charms all discords into sweetest harmony.

Who can blame them if they lingered on their way, — if they did not reach Sandys until the sun was westering low on the horizon? Never could hours with just the same bliss come back to them; for love must have the flavour of its circumstances, and these continually change. This afternoon there was the parting with Jenifer Waring, and the expected meeting with Hannah Mettelane, and the long unbroken companionship of their happy journey, and, not without its influence, though unspoken of, the meeting with Anastasia de Burg. Unconsciously, even this had drawn them closer together. Anastasia was a bitter element in herself, but the very act of eluding her special notice turned the bitterness into that sense of elation which is the result of escape from anything evil. Perhaps, indeed, when the light of heaven shows us clearly the pitfalls and dangers of the earth-road which led us to the Holy City our sweetest songs of gratitude will be, not for the troubles we have conquered, but for those which we have escaped.

When they reached Sandys, Olivia was pleasantly surprised. She had expected the house to express by many outward tokens of neglect the anxiety and loss which was in its owner's heart. But Hannah Mettelane was not a woman who delighted in ceremonious and mournful symbols of sorrow. Joy in the Lord, and doing her duty in it, was the cheerful law of her life. In all troublesome events she could find some comfort, though it was only the negative admission that things might have been worse. She had no children, and Olivia was dear to

her. Indeed, the girl had spent much of her life in the low, wide-spreading Mettelane farmhouse, under the almost motherly care of Hannah Mettelane.

She was at the open door of Sandys to meet them, her broad, beaming face one general smile of welcome; and it fully included Nathaniel, although she had never seen him before; but her woman's heart told her that he was Olivia's lover, and a true love affair was to Hannah Mettelane a true delight.

The house had its usual atmosphere of peace and content and spotless cleanliness. They went into the parlour. The basil pot in the window diffused its restorative aroma, and great nosegays of roses gave a delightful freshness and fragrance to the handsome old room. A cold capon, a dish of curds and cream, some delicate Christ Church tarts, and a bowl of ripe cherries were spread upon the whitest of linen. Red Rhine wine stood by Nathaniel's side, and Aunt Hannah brought with her own hands a foaming pitcher of delicious new milk. She understood also their desire to be everything to each other, and she invented a number of house duties in order to leave Olivia the pleasant task of entertaining her lover.

Nathaniel had told himself that he would not remain many minutes, but he could not resist the enchantment of the hour and the love which glorified it. He remembered his lonely mother affectionately, but yet he lingered until the twilight lost every tinge of colour and lay like a gray veil over the face of sleeping Nature. Then he rose to say good-by, and at the same moment Hannah Mettelane entered the room with a letter in her hand. It was from her brother Roger, and the bearer of it was waiting to carry back the answer.

"You see, both of you," she said, "that things are a

long way better than we thought for. Roger says he has got a little room, out of the main room, for himself and Asa, and maybe they are n't so bad off after all. Prisons can't be homes, and we mustn't expect it of them. Roger is well and having a good conscience, and what is there better than that? There is only one bit of strange news that I can see, and perhaps now it is the best news of all: it's about a young man called John Whitehead; he is got out of prison and bonds of all kinds."

"Free?"

"Ay, my dear lad, free! Set free by God Almighty's own hand."

"Dead?"

"Nay, then, we had better say 'living forever.'"

"Poor John!"

"Not 'poor,' Olivia. No indeed! Your father writes that the young man was happy to enter death land, and went away in a great state of love and rapture."

"Of what did he die?"

"Of jail fever, and want of all earthly comforts. Roger says his body was worn to ruin and ready to let drop the soul when they reached Appleby."

"He was Mary Whitehead's last son. Her eldest perished in Colchester jail, her second on Bristol common. How I wish I could comfort her! Poor, poor mother!"

"Rich is the mother of holy martyrs, Olivia! It is a great thing to have had three sons with such white consciences. I think she got a better portion for them than the mother of Zebedee's children asked for her sons. And Roger says John Whitehead preached 'the truth' to his fellow-prisoners until his voice failed him, and he could only whisper, softer and softer, 'Jesus Christ! Jesus Christ! Jesus Christ!'"

“He has found the way to rest, to rest forever,” said Nathaniel; “and, oh, how glad he must have been when to him the weary controversies of earth suddenly became silent!”

Then Hannah Mettelane, softly weeping, went out of the room, and Olivia lifted her starlike eyes to Nathaniel. Never had the sympathy between them been so sweet and strong. Speechless with emotion, he led her to the open casement. The night incense of the rose-beds was wafted across her flower-like face; the ineffable joy of a pure and perfect love made her tremble beneath his light touch. He whispered her name and drew her close to his heart.

Still softer was her answer, “My soul! My soul! I will love thee forever!”

This confession, spontaneous as the perfume of the roses or the song of the nightingale singing by his nest in the sycamore-tree, filled Nathaniel with a rapture beyond words. He stood silently gazing into Olivia’s eyes, seeing in the dusky gloom her face, white as a lily, shining with the love behind it. Their souls had met before; now they spoke to each other,—were as truly one as “the sound in the echo or the thought in the word.”

What did they say in that wondrous interval which was but moments yet seemed to stretch infinitely backward and forward? They said everything! though the only audible expression was the long sigh with which the mysterious communing ended.

It blended with the stir of the rising wind in the tree-tops and the twittering of some birds in the ivy above the window. Then they were aware of quick footsteps, of voices faintly familiar, of the near and actual invasion of earth into their transient heaven. They looked to-

ward the door and saw Hannah Mettelane enter. She had a lighted candle in her hand, and she was speaking with some one who was close behind her. It was George Fox.

He came forward and took the hands of Nathaniel and Olivia and clasped them together in his own hands. "I am come to put you asunder, children," he said; "but only for a little while. Olivia, thou must go to London and plead with Cromwell himself for thy father's life. There is no lawyer for him but thee. Judge and jury are bought and sold. In this corner of Westmoreland De Burg is stronger than justice; yea, even than thy father's gold."

"George Fox —"

"Nay, Nathaniel, in this matter I will hear no dissent from thee. Verily, I have considered all, and I see that there is no other way."

"At thy word I will go to London, friend George."

"And I will go with thee, friend Olivia. On the third day, early in the morning, be ready." Then, turning to Hannah Mettelane: "I can neither eat nor drink, dear neighbour. I must cross the sands to Ulverstone to-night, and thou knowest the tide will flow at its own time."

"How shall we go, George?"

"Thou must take thy own coach, Olivia. Horses can be changed at all the post-houses, and the hurry is not so great as to cause thee weariness."

"Thou wilt surely go with me, George?"

"Yea; and also friend Jacob Willis and his wife, who are under a constraint of the Spirit to visit the persecuted Friends in the Plymouth colony. Their ship sails from London in two weeks; so then thou canst help them so far on their journey, and have the while the comfort of their presence."

Then, being pressed by the rising tide, he hurried away, and Nathaniel and Olivia watched him fade into the gray distance. His coming had been like the call of a bugle or the clash of a bell. The fighting, wrestling world was again pressing them hard, and Nathaniel felt it with a special resentment.

"Though the good man rides hard," said Hannah Mettelane, going to the window, "'t will be hurry all if he get across the sands ere the tide catch him."

"George Fox knows the way that he takes. Here is matter of more importance, Mistress Mettelane. It is not fit that Olivia should go to London without me, and in that case it is most fit she goes as my wife."

"I am of your mind, Captain Kelder; and why not?"

"There are two sufficient reasons 'why not,' Aunt Hannah. How can I marry while my father is in prison? 'T would indeed be a great occasion for people to speak ill of me. And also, I know not if I should be welcome to Nathaniel's people. Indeed, I fear I should bring contention among them."

"You are to marry me, and not my people, Olivia."

"Nay, but I will not marry thee without the good-will of thy people. I will neither go to thy home, nor take thee into my home, without their liking."

From this opinion Olivia could not be persuaded. Although she made no complaint of Lady Kelder's neglect, she was keenly sensitive to it. She was aware that Nathaniel had informed his parents of their intention to marry, and she looked at least for some courteous social recognition of the intention. At this hour Nathaniel also felt it. He found it impossible to make excuses for his mother; and when he arrived at home he had thought over his supposed wrong until his heart was hot within

him, and it gave him a certain satisfaction to say bluntly, —

“I asked Olivia Prideaux to marry me to-morrow, and she refused. That is because you have not given her the welcome due to my intended wife.”

“You must be moon-struck! Or love-struck! Mid-summer madness! Marry to-morrow! What are you dreaming about?”

“She goes to London on her father’s business, and I wish to go with her.”

“I dare be bound you do. Well?”

“Mother, you are cruel. I never knew you so before. If you love me, go and see Olivia to-morrow and tell her she is welcome in Kelderby.”

“Shall I tell a lie to pleasure Mistress Prideaux? As to Kelderby, how do you know that it is mine, or yours, to offer? The selfishness of youth passes my patience! While all Kelderby — house and lands — hangs in the balance, while your father is fighting for his and your rights in a world now strange and hard to him, while I watch and pray, neither sleeping nor eating, weary to fainting with the restless walk that alone relieves my anxious heart, you are dawdling after that Quakeress, who has made us all this sorrow; and then, to crown your injustice, I am cruel because I humble not myself to her. Nathaniel, you are cruel! And I never knew you so before.”

She began to weep bitterly, and Nathaniel was not able to endure that spectacle. He soothed her as best he could; he mingled his tears with hers; he found that his brave intention to insist upon Olivia’s rights had ended in a reconciliation which left his mother decidedly the gainer. But who can blame him? Brutal is the son who is not vanquished by his mother’s tears!

He went to his room utterly worn out with feeling, and yet he could not sleep. The face, the voice, the touch, the influence of Olivia, dominated him. He whispered her name continually. He felt all the bitterness and the sweetness of a love debarred and crossed, and yet potential above and beyond all reasonings. It was unfortunate that he had spoken to his mother at that time. She was miserable in the absence of the baron and in the danger of Kelderby. Indeed, suspense fretted every one; for no word had yet come back from Baron Kelder, nor was any just yet to be expected.

Meanwhile the baron was nearing the end of his journey. He had changed his horse frequently, but never his steady gallop, until he came to the long brick streets of London. For as soon as Odel Kelder accepted the duty of rescuing his inheritance he forgot his years, and felt not the infirmities belonging to them. In the calm regularity of his late life he had accumulated a reserve of strength which now answered all his demands upon it, and he arrived at his journey's end not more weary than a man in the prime of life might have been. The sun was setting, and he went to an inn at Charing Cross and rested there all night.

Oliver Cromwell was still at Hampton Court, and Kelder's intention was to rise early and try to obtain an audience before the business of the day began; but he fell into a sleep so profound that nothing wakened him until the morning was far advanced. Indeed, the business of the day was over when his name was given to the Protector. So little ceremony was then in vogue that the officer in waiting left the door open between the rooms, and Kelder could see his old general walking with a weary, sorrow-laden face in the long gallery.

His name broke Oliver's revery in two. He stood still and let it call back to his memory the man who bore it. The recognition came with a smile, and he walked toward the entrance and said, "Is it thou indeed? Come in then, for thou art right welcome." Kelder loved the man, and these friendly, honest words made his heart burn. And as they walked up and down the long gallery, hung with pictures representing the triumphs of Cæsar, they began to talk of the triumphs of the Puritan host, and of the days when they had fought side by side.

"Thy heart was then plain to me, Kelder; but now there are such jealousies and such a spirit of calumny among us, that my condition as to flesh and blood is very hard. Oh, I say so, I do truly."

"I love thee, and thou hast done great things for England."

"Through God. He blessed me therein as it pleased him; for I raised round me such men as thou art, Kelder, who had the fear of God, and made some conscience of what they did."

"We were never beaten — never!"

"That is a matter of praise to God, and it hath this instruction in it, — to own men who are religious and godly. Oh, I love men that keep their integrity, — men who have a single eye, and a whole body full of light." And then Kelder's face answered the face at his side, — the strong scarred face, threatening fierceness and rigours to the unfaithful, but tremulous with sensibility and full of love and sadness to those whom he trusted.

After some further discourse they heard the sound of music and singing, and Oliver, still talking, led Kelder into the great hall, where there were two fine organs. Mr. John Milton was playing on the larger, and a

choir of boys sang to his music that fine canon, by Ben Jonson, —

“Look how the winds upon the waves grow tame,
Take up land sounds upon their purple wings,
And catching each from other bear the same
To every angle of their sacred springs.
So will we take his praise and hurl his name
About the globe in thousand airy rings.”

Cromwell was passionately fond of noble music, and it was but a few moments before the mounting, joyful strains made him forget speech. He listened with pleased attention until they died away in low wandering symphonies. Then he turned suddenly to Kelder and asked what business in special had brought him to London so soon after his son's visit.

“To undo the business about which my son came.” And beginning at Nathaniel's visit to De Burg, Kelder told Oliver the whole story precisely as the events of it had happened.

Cromwell's answer was delayed long enough to show a trifle of hesitation. “I like not,” he said, “to fasten and to unloose, — to say ‘yea’ and ‘nay’ as it were with the same breath; but if a mistake hath been made, then it is the part of wisdom to unmake it with all the speed that may be. And in this matter it is evident that De Burg is without common gratitude and without principle. He will go to Charles Stuart, will he? Yea, if he can. We must look to that; indeed we must.”

The wistful, speculative look called into his eyes by revealing music was all gone. He was mentally regarding the man, insensible to the kindness of kindred and the clemency of his country, who would defraud the one and betray the other. The implements of writing were at hand, and in fifteen minutes he had penned a private

order to Secretary Thurloe concerning Kelderby, and sent a command to General Selden regarding De Burg.

Dinner waited while he completed this business, but as soon as the letters had been intrusted to the officer in waiting he turned pleasantly to the domestic rite, taking Kelder's company as a matter beyond the necessity of a formal request. The table was, as Nathaniel had described it, plainer and less delicately laid than the table at Kelderby. Wealthy burghers all over England dined with as much ceremony and plenty; and excepting the Lady Elizabeth Claypole, none of the party were dressed with any extravagance of material or fashion. Music in an adjoining room filled the pauses in conversation; and doubtless there were times when Cromwell, both from private and public causes, was glad of such excuse as it made for his silence.

But not so with Odinel Kelder. They had too many great and merciful events to recall to each other; and the Lady Elizabeth listened with a wife's interest and delight to Kelder's unaffected praises of her lord. No one could doubt his honesty; and Cromwell, weary of double-dealers, looked with pleasure in the clear face of this true friend. Even Bridget, his spiritually-minded daughter, "a woman breathing after Christ, acquainted with temptations, humbled and not exalted by her father's greatness," could not refrain acknowledging by a kind smile the genuine affection of this single-hearted adherent.

Music and singing passed the time after dinner; a madrigal, by Mr. Lock, being repeated several times to pleasure Kelder, who was able ever afterward to recall some of its most taking falls. Then there was a psalm sung, which the Protector gave out from the small black psalm-book he had carried through all his campaigns, and after it the ladies retired to their own privacy. But

Cromwell and Kelder drew closer to each other. They had a pipe of the Virginian weed, and then walked on the terrace; and as the stars grew larger and brighter they spoke of those sacred personal aspects of religion which are the secret strength of that "spiritual confidence" we are commanded to "restrain not."

The following day Kelder received back his bond, and with it the assurance of the Protector that Kelderby was freely in his own power again. He called for a taper, and they burned the parchment silently upon the hearth; but when the blaze was dead, and the bond was a shrivelled band of gray ashes, Cromwell spoke in a low, warning voice, —

"Take it not ill what I say — I know you will not — or else you will be ruined yet. And truly 't is not I that say it; it is the counsel of the wisest man. 'He that is surety for a stranger shall smart for it; and he that hateth suretiship is sure.'"

But though his affairs were thus comfortably settled, Kelder did not immediately leave London. Cromwell clung to him with a simple regard he found it hard to resist; and nearly every night for three weeks the two men walked the terrace at Hampton Court, and talked together of the things which both loved, — "the wisdom of God in a mystery," — all those extreme thoughts which men seldom care to reach, beyond which no man can go. Perhaps neither had an intellect trained for subtle disputing, nor did they even try to measure with the foot-rule of their understanding the immutable wisdom of God; but in religious matters both had a child's heart, and both were seeking to enter the kingdom of heaven by the gate of spiritual wistfulness.

XI.

OLIVIA AND CROMWELL.

“ Prosperity and adversity, life and death, poverty and riches, come of the Lord. . . . Love, and the way of good works, are from him.”

. . . “ the constant change and transmutation
Of action and of contemplation, —
Downward, the Scripture brought from on high ;
Upward, exalted again to the sky :
Downward, the literal interpretation ;
Upward, the vision and mystery.”

LADY KELDER had won a victory over her son, but she had no sense of triumph. What if she got her wish about Olivia, and lost it about Kelderby? The God whom she served was a jealous God, balancing his favours according to the service given. She could not expect too much from him. To clear Kelderby of all its obligations to De Burg, to clear Nathaniel of his obligations to Olivia, was perhaps beyond her desert. Of two evils, she must choose the lesser. After hours of restless anxiety, she resolved to sacrifice her personal feelings to the more permanent good. If only Kelderby were saved, she would try — yes, she would try — to accept Olivia.

The mysterious travail of sleep brought her only visions of confusion and anxiety. When the morning came, she resolved to call upon Olivia, and judge with her own eyes and intelligence as to the capabilities of the girl for the honour Nathaniel designed her. The

concession was a great one, — how great Nathaniel could not understand, because the way to Sandys, so hard for his mother, was just the way he liked best of all to go.

“’T is the greatest trial of my life, I believe,” she said to herself; and she honestly felt it to be so. On the contrary, Nathaniel was eager to accompany her; but she refused his attendance with a sharpness that had something of reproach in it.

“No, sir! I will take my woman with me. I have no mind to be audience to your veiled sweethearting. Simon the shrimp-fisher was here yesterday about his cottage. Give a little of your time to the necessities of the people until your father returns. And to-day there may be a letter from him; ’t is fit surely that either you or I be here to receive it.”

Do women dress for men? Never as they do for their own sex. Lady Kelder took from their manifold scented wrappings her very finest garments, — an overdress of dark violet velvet, with a quilted satin petticoat of the colour of old ivory. A thick gold chain held her pomander-case, the case itself being of fretted Moorish work, studded with gems. She put it to her nostrils, and with a wretched little laugh said to Jael, “Faith! I shall need the camphor, I know. My heart hath a strange fainting-sickness already. And give me my fan, Jael, — the one of foreign feathers with the silver handle, — and my head-dress of ivory satin edged with Flemish point.”

She stood a moment before her mirror, looking steadily at the woman reflected there, — a handsome, resolute woman, tenacious of her own opinions, and finding out for them warranty of Holy Scripture or holy men. When she turned away, Jael gave her a long mantle of black Genoa velvet, and gloves of Spanish leather, richly

embroidered and perfumed with orange flowers. Nathaniel was taken with a heartache when he saw her. He understood that the visit, undertaken with so much ceremony, intended little kindness; yet he felt himself the influence of such royal apparel, and conducted his mother to her coach with a deferential affection which would not be reasoned with.

That morning Olivia was strangely sad and fearful. A journey to London was as great an event then as a journey across oceans is now; and the very necessity for it implied a danger for her father that she had not apprehended. She was employed in preparations for it when Lady Kelder's step upon the stone passage arrested her attention. Although it was a firm, slow step, Olivia knew at once that it was the step of a woman. She lifted her head and listened; for Hannah Mettelane had gone into Kendal to make some purchases, and she knew that the reception of any stranger must devolve upon her. As the visitor approached, she laid down her work and stood up to meet her.

At the same time Gideon threw wide the door, and with some circumstance announced, "Lady Kelder." The two women looked steadily at each other, — Olivia's face expectant, indeterminate, ready to reflect instantly a smile or a pleasant light; Lady Kelder's intent, curious, critical, for as yet she had seen Olivia only in a very hurried and cursory manner. Once they had passed each other on Kendal streets; and once, when Lady Kelder called upon Jane D'Acre, Olivia was just taking leave of her friend. She had therefore but a slight remembrance of the girl; now, however, she regarded her with a distinct purpose of examination.

She saw a tall, slender, girlish figure in a white linen dress, with a square collar of English lace encircling her

throat. She saw an oval face, delicately rounded ; eyes soft, deep, heavenly, with large and solemn gaze ; a sweet mouth, rosy and tender ; a steady, round chin ; a colour like a wild rose ; and a great abundance of soft brown hair. She felt also something of the unknown and unseen in her very simplicity, in the look and air of the girl, which checked every impulse toward what was trifling or disrespectful.

But what the tongue or pen stumblingly or slowly expresses, the eyes see in a moment ; and Olivia's appearance and manner were flashed upon Lady Kelder's consciousness as she walked with stately grace from the door to the centre of the room. There Olivia met her. Lady Kelder courtesied slightly, expecting from Olivia the deeper reverence due from youth to age. But Olivia's self-respecting creed forbade her to bend her knee to mortal man or woman. She simply extended her hand and said, "Thou art very welcome."

There was then a momentary pause ; but Lady Kelder was not a woman who hesitated, or who advanced to the expression of her opinions by roundabout ways. She took the seat offered, and said, —

"Mistress Prideaux, I ask you seriously, and I pray you resolve me truly, if 't is your purpose to make a marriage with Captain Kelder?"

"I have promised to marry him, — if God will."

"Oh, indeed ! I observe that young people usually make God's will fit their own desires."

"My conscience is a swift witness. I desire only what God wills."

"My son wished to marry you to-day. In such a hurry of self-pleasing wherein will you discover any will higher than your own?"

"I willed not to marry thy son to-day. 'T was out

of a sudden great fear and love that he spoke. If thou knowest the circumstances, thou must understand his desire."

"Indeed, Mistress, I do not need you to explain my son to me. And I am agreeably pleased to find that you have so much sense as to put the bridle on an offer so beyond all reason. I must tell you that Kelderby itself stands in the 'nay' or 'yea' of the Protector, or else, in a case still worse, the honour of the De Burgs. It is inconceivable that Nathaniel should be wife-seeking when his inheritance and his home and the honour of his name stand in such jeopardy."

"Thou must know that my father's honour and my father's estate stand in still more perilous conditions. How then could I take the thought of marriage into my heart at this time?"

"'T is indeed a time laden with strange things, and you must see how inconvenient marrying and giving in marriage must be in the press and hurry of so many great events."

"I think not of it. My heart is wholly set upon my father's peril."

"Nathaniel says that you come not to Kelderby because I ask you not."

"Nathaniel puts my love and his own below what fits their right when he says so. Truly, I will not come to Kelderby without thy welcome; but I marry not Kelderby, but Nathaniel Kelder."

"'T is an unnecessary pride that you show. A mother has some rights in the son she has borne."

"A true wife will never wrong them. I seek not Nathaniel Kelder; he seeks me."

"Ah! I thought surely that you loved Nathaniel."

"Thou must not conceive different, and put wrong

words in my mouth. But I love him not better than duty and honour and truth. If thou art afraid I am going to wrong thy son in any respect, put all thy fears away. I love not Nathaniel Kelder for myself, but beyond myself. When thou understandest that, thou wilt have a true welcome for me ; and perhaps, if God will, I may then come to Kelderby."

"What will you —"

"I will not at all. God wills."

"You must know that the Kelders are a very old family. 'T is indeed a trial when they mate not with their equals. I say nothing against Master Prideaux, who is doubtless an excellent and respectable man."

"I count the probity and sagacity of my father so much higher than the traditional glory of dead men as living virtue is higher than dead virtue."

"Dead virtues are honourable, Mistress."

"Yea, for the dead."

"On this matter truly we may have divided opinions ; but if it comes to giving occasion for evil-speaking, we must be at one. There hath been talk and gossip about you and Captain Kelder, and the tongues of others are not in our control. Would it not be better to give the public assurance in regard to your position?"

"If I suffered talk and gossip to move me I should fear the tongue of man more than the eye of God."

"As you like, Mistress. For myself, I have ever found my misfortunes more supportable than the comments of my friends on them. To be sure, if you heed not the words said of you —"

"If people speak ill of me, I ask what kind of people they admire, and then it often happens that I am quite consoled. Thou wilt find it in general a comfortable answer. Wilt thou eat and drink with me?"

“I am neither hungry nor thirsty, and my servants and horses wait.”

Olivia had risen as she spoke, and Lady Kelder involuntarily followed her example. Young and slight as the girl looked, she carried herself with great dignity. In Sandys the mistress of Sandys was the equal of the mistress of Kelderby; for in her home a woman has immeasurable though intangible advantages. She stands on her own ground, and thereby acquires a moral right which prejudices any antagonist.

The interview was evidently over, and Lady Kelder felt that she had gained nothing from it. The serenity of Olivia had been proof against every little wind of passion or ill-will. She had not lost an inch of ground. She had made no concessions and no promises, and she had told Lady Kelder nothing but what she already knew.

“She has a thousand virtues. If she had a single vice she would be more endurable,” said Lady Kelder, as soon as her coach drove away. “Take my fan, Jael, and give me a breath of air. I never thought so well, and so ill, of my sex.”

“She hath a name beyond all praise.”

“A dowdy, Jael; a very dowdy, in a linen frock. It passes my comprehension. Nathaniel hath seen some of the finest women of the day.”

“Well, my Lady, you looked like a queen, and I dare say she was a bit flustered at the meeting with you.”

“Flustered! She had the composure of a goddess, — I mean of a saint.”

“Was there any falling out with her, my Lady?”

“You might as well try to fall out with a prayer-book, Jael. But I would she had spoken the temper I saw in her eyes.”

They were riding swiftly through the estate of Sandys, and Lady Kelder could not but notice the fine order in which park and meadows and cornfields were kept.

“I believe the old goldsmith weeds them as carefully as he dusted his shop and wares. I dare be bound he enters every furrow in his ledger. But 't is a grand old place, that is beyond denying. And 't is possible the proud little maid may have the grace to take nurture. They who live in Kelderby grow Kelder-like. What hinders?”

“That is but a fluffment of talk, my Lady. Everything hinders. I never heard tell in my time of nurture being stronger than nature. The cuckoo lays in the sparrow's nest, and the bird hatched is cuckoo to its last feather. The cuckoo lays in the thrush's nest, but no up-bringing will make it sing the thrush's song; it will cry 'cuckoo' to the long end of its life. The Quakress may come to the Kelders' nest, but she 'll never change her nature with her name.”

“By troth and faith! you are right, Jael. For I came out of Singleton Seat, and though I be married to Kelder's name, I shall be Joan Singleton till I be no more on earth.”

Then she was silent a while, and Jael watched her fingering her pomander chain or the sheath of her fan, and saw how her handsome face grew more and more fretful and disappointed. For Lady Kelder was upright enough with her own heart to be aware that her dislike to Olivia sprang from the girl's trifling peculiarities jarring her own antagonistic peculiarities. She knew quite well that these were a thousand times overbalanced by Olivia's excellences, and that she ought to conquer her unreasonable antipathy; but she did not; she could not.

She had two regrets in regard to her visit: first, that

she had worn her best clothing, for Olivia had not seemed to notice it, — certainly she had shown no symptom of being in any way subjugated by its splendour; second, that she had been neither as kind nor as disagreeable as she had intended. The sense of failure was with her. She had not conquered Olivia; neither had she irritated her.

When she returned home Nathaniel's face made her still more angry, it hoped and asked so much. The longing curiosity on it was almost painful, and she instantly reflected that it was "that girl" he was anxious and curious about. She spoke of the heat, of the dust, of the weight of her dress, and went to her room to change it without a word or a sign which could enable Nathaniel to interpret her. Of course it was cruel, but she felt as if at that hour she did well to be cruel.

Truly she pitied herself as she looked in her mirror and thought of the unpleasant and unprofitable journey she had taken. And Nathaniel's depressed and injured air did not tend to make her at all sorry for him. It was beyond reason that he should add this care to her anxieties about her husband and her home. So when at length he asked, "Did you see Olivia, Mother?" she was rather glad to answer gloomily, —

"Indeed I saw her."

"I am afraid — dear mother, I hope you have not quarrelled with her."

She was standing with her back to him, at the open door of the china closet. She turned round in a passion. "God's mercy on me!" she cried. "May not the girl just as likely have quarrelled with me? I will not talk with you about her. If you have no other subject, I will pity myself so far as to be silent."

Then Nathaniel suddenly rose and took a letter from

the chimney-piece. "I had forgotten," he said. "'T is from my father, as you may see. The bearer is in the servants' hall."

"And you could think of any other thing or person? You are unworthy of your father, Nathaniel. But I wonder not! I wonder not!"

She was breaking the seal with trembling fingers as she spoke, and after a few moments' consideration of its contents she said, in a low, intense voice, "Kelderby is saved! Kelderby is saved!" And in the moment of her joy she forgot Olivia and fully forgave Nathaniel.

Privately, also, she was now quite reconciled to the events of the morning visit. She was glad there had been no nearer sympathy between Olivia and herself. If she had ever been weak enough to contemplate accepting Olivia as a compromise with the Almighty's sense of her deserts, she had now a double gratification in feeling that both her desires had been granted her. Kelderby was saved, and she had been saved from any promises regarding Olivia. Her home had been given back to her without any mortifying concession on her part. Was she made gentle and kindly by this favour? No! She was human enough to experience immediately one of those heart-hardenings which too often follow a lifted anxiety or a desire granted.

The animus of this unhappy meeting affected Olivia in a manner still more personal and profound. For though she went with Lady Kelder to her coach, and preserved a quiet civility of manner to the last moment of their interview, she was quivering with controlled emotion. And in the solitude of her room the conflict was renewed. Her enemy was still with her. The battle had only been carried from the outward court to the inner sanctuary of life.

She stood silent with her hands dropped and clasped before her, and her eyes dilating, as though looking far, far down into the depths of her soul. Lady Kelder had wounded her in every sense. Her love had been questioned, her pride humbled, she had been made to feel that she was the troubler of Nathaniel's house. She had been subjected to a criticism judicially cold; forced suddenly to meet a trial for which she was quite unprepared, and which in her present circumstances appeared a gratuitous sting added to sorrow strange and unavoidable.

At first she could hardly help blaming Nathaniel. He ought to have prevented Lady Kelder's visit; or, if that was impossible, he ought to have accompanied his mother. It was cruel to leave her to face alone the imperious discontent of the disappointed woman. A tumult of outraged feeling made spiritual anarchy in her usually reasonable soul, and sudden flashes of resentment, ending in spontaneous thoughts and plans of revenge, made her cheeks burn and her mouth quiver.

The struggle was harder and longer because her reverent spirit did not suffer her to press into God's presence while under such angry influences. There is a veil between the holiest part of our nature and the Divinity, even as in the visible temple there was a veil before the Shekinah; and Olivia did not dare, with an impatient heart, to pass beyond it. She stood silent until her will had conquered, — until pride, anger, hate, revenge, and wounded self-love were lost in that wondrous depth out of which grows the love of God; till she heard the tender question that besought her complaint, —

“Thou, then? Who art Thou?”

With streaming eyes and swelling heart she bowed herself, and answered, “Thou knowest me, and all my sorrows.”

And yet how sweet it was to tell them over, and to feel in the telling the infinite sympathy of the Divine heart ! Then what serene amazement took the place of all fears and of all conclusions ! Her trouble grew lighter than a grasshopper, and she rose up from the internal revelation joyfully resigned to all that God willed.

Lady Kelder had passed beyond her horizon, and she looked outward with far-seeing gaze. A glory that never was on sea or land transfigured her face ; a contagious warmth, a thrill of positive faith, radiated from her lovely form. For the most real of all splendours, the most wonderful of all miracle^s, is within us. And those who doubt must consider that the human soul is the place where two worlds meet, — where the Infinite touches the finite.

The reflex influence of this spiritual communion did not desert Olivia for many days. It gave to her final interviews with her lover a delightful peace. She passed over Lady Kelder's visit with a serene indifference that made it hard for Nathaniel to talk of the subject ; and yet he understood from Olivia's reticence that the meeting had not been a pleasant one.

On the morning of her departure they stood together in the embrasure of a large window in the parlour. The lower casements were open to catch the dewy perfumes of the garden, and Nathaniel clasped her left hand between his own hands. She was very pale, and the hurry of the preparations for the journey moved her so much that he felt it slightly flutter in his grasp.

Jacob and Jane Willis both sat silent. With heads thrown slightly backward and closed eyes they communed with their own souls, seeking an assurance for their unusual journey. Fox was walking in the garden. He had his hat in his hand and the sunshine brightened his long

fair hair. His meditations were doubtless holy and happy, for his face was calm and reverent, though his eyes were toward the boxwood and the flowers. Hannah Mettelane was ordering the breakfast, and the servants were packing the luggage of the travellers in the boot of the coach. No one was regarding the lovers; they were practically alone.

“My father will doubtless be home in a day or two, beloved; then I shall make every haste to overtake you.”

“Thou must not put me before thy duty; but if thou canst wisely come —” and she turned slightly and raised her eyes to him.

He could not resist the something he saw in them. “You hope, Olivia! You are happy!” And he lifted her face in his hands and kissed it.

“I love thee, Nathaniel. Love always hopes. I will keep thy memory to make my happiness with, dear one. And thou must not doubt. I think true love is a promise, and surely it is God’s good pleasure to give what he has promised.”

“My soul, I love you! I will love you forever.”

“Thou knowest I love thee truly.”

“We have chosen each other out of all the world.”

“I have chosen thee.”

“You will be my wife?”

“I have told thee so.”

“But when?”

“That I know not. The rose blooms at its own hour; wouldst thou tear its beauty out of the bud? Love will grow to marriage, dear one; but shall not love have the glory of its perfect hour?”

“Can I love you more perfectly?”

“I think thou canst, or thou couldst wait with more

patience. If thou lovest me for eternity, there is all eternity to love me in. And this time is my father's time. He asks me for the first and best of it. George Fox thinks that I may save his life. Few daughters have such honour given them. When my dear father is out of all trouble — ”

“Then you will marry me?”

“When thy father and mother are willing for our happiness, then I will be thy wife. I will love thee first of all, and best of all. I will honour thee with my whole soul, — I will love thee perfectly because I so honour thee.”

He saw her soul in her eyes; it informed and vivified her face, her white, slender throat, her small hands, until the flesh and blood grew translucent and ethereal.

To pure-hearted young girls heaven gives such transparent fleshly veils; they have no false or sinful thoughts to hide. But as the heart grows hard and insincere the soul puts on many veils, and the light within becomes darkness. Then flesh and blood is simple clay.

When at length the hour of parting came he clasped her to his heart with passionate, sorrowful love. At this moment, with his tears upon her cheeks and his kisses on her lips, she would not wrong his love and hers with any pretences. She suffered him to see that she wept and loved with him. She murmured sweet broken words of affection; with the long, long gaze of lingering love she watched his tall dark figure till the green vault of the sycamores hid him from her view.

Great emotion makes many men silent, almost stern; and Nathaniel quickly left Sandys, though Mistress Mettelane urged him to rest there for a little while. For Hannah was one of those women, sweet and homely as honey, who would draw the sting of all men's sorrow into

their own breast ; and she pitied the young man, hiding with such proud reticence his anxious love and grief.

However, he consoled himself with the reflection that the baron would certainly be home in a day or two. His affairs settled, there was nothing to delay him in London ; and Nathaniel raised himself in his stirrups and instinctively searched the horizon for the tall thin figure he expected to see. The letter already received had made no mention of his return. "I have seen Cromwell and Kelderby is quite released. I am in comfortable health." That was all, and at the moment of their reception such words had seemed full of all content ; but now Nathaniel wished his father had added, "I take the road at once for the north."

In the mean time Olivia pursued her painful journey southward. The quaint old towns where they rested, or baited or changed horses, gave her a momentary interest, and Fox usually took her for a short walk while they were necessarily delayed ; but the whole moving drama of streets and lanes and of white roads, along which crept the great pack-wagons with their smocked drivers and belled horses, affected her much as the phantasmagoria of a dream. Hour after hour she sat in silence, listening vaguely to the measured talk of Fox and Willis, or with shut eyes recalling the fair garden and house of Sandys, and the happy and sorrowful scenes with which they were blended.

When she arrived in London she was suffering much from headache and exhaustion. The last day of the journey had been an agonizing interval, which she had borne with closed eyes and lips. The men scarcely understood her sufferings, and Mistress Willis felt a slight scorn for the girl so much more easily wearied than herself, — a woman of sixty years. She reflected, as women usually

reflect, upon the superiority of their generation and the decadence of the young people growing up at their side.

They went to the Blue Boar Inn, in King Street ; and for that night Olivia permitted every thought of love or sorrow to escape her. Her slight form succumbed to physical suffering, her heart ached, she was soul weary ; when the landlady left her alone in the darkish room she could have cried with joy for the simple relief of solitude. Weary and suffering, she laid her head down upon her pillow and He gave his beloved sleep, — sleep so deep and sweet and long that Fox became uneasy and asked the landlady to visit her guest.

The dusty sunshine of the narrow, noisy street stole in through the crevices of the shutters and lay in golden bars across the great oaken bed. Its spotless linen looked mystically white in the gloom of the veiled day, and the sweet face at rest upon the pillow had the lovelier pallor of life held in the solemn pause of sleep deeper than the tide of dreams. The landlady walked softly to the bedside and stood looking at the sleeping girl. How exquisitely still was the breathing miracle ! The small, bow-shaped mouth had the faintest smile ; the curtains of the eyes dropped their dark fringes on cheeks softly rounded, and white with the warm shadowy white of a lily leaf. A band of sunshine turned the loosened hair into a glory. The small hands were lightly clasped, and lying on the snowy white of the linen, showed, like the face and throat, the duskish pallor of flesh and blood. All around the bed hung the scent of lavender, bringing thoughts of warm, sunny gardens to wander about the silent sleeping-place.

“ God bless the girl ! ” the woman whispered. “ I was once as young as she be ; ” and she softly drew the cur-

tains so as to shade her from the light. But at the door she turned and took into her memory the dark, draped bedstead, with its soft, white interior, and the fair young sleeper in its dim, slumberous peace.

The next day Olivia arose thoroughly refreshed, and conscious of that spiritual exaltation which desires to face a crisis, and is straitened till its duty is accomplished. They went early in the day to Hampton Court, but Cromwell had gone to Westminster, so they were delayed for many hours. Indeed, Fox was advising Olivia to return to the city until the morning, when the officer brought him into the Protector's presence. He had not sent in Olivia's name lest the interview should be denied; and when she entered with Fox, the Protector looked up with considerable annoyance from the writing on which he was engaged.

"George Fox, you are come here complaining again. I know you are, and I will not suffer it."

"Verily, Oliver, thy conscience tells thee the truth. Thou promised to bring in a bill putting faith before all forms. That would set free hundreds of good men, — thy old companions in arms, — who now die daily for Christ's sake."

Cromwell listened impatiently. "I will answer anon. Who may this maid be? Thy daughter?"

"She is a daughter of sorrow, and so thy daughter and my daughter and the daughter of all good men." Then he looked at Olivia, and she stepped forward and said:

"My father is in the hands of those that hate him. I pray thee to see that he get justice."

Cromwell looked at her with piercing eyes. Her innocent yet resolute face, lifted so fearlessly to him, touched his heart. But he was in that mood of being "weary in well-doing," into which the best men sometimes fall. He

felt as if he had been kind and just and faithful all in vain. At that hour he was tired of doing good only to be unthankfully treated ; so he considered the suppliant girl before he answered her. He saw that she was very lovely, and that her dress, though plain, was of the richest material. But he understood from her speech that she was a Quakeress, and like Joseph with his brethren, he hardened his face and spoke roughly to her, though the irrepressible quiver of her closed mouth made his own mouth quiver in sympathy.

“Who is your father?”

“He is called Roger Prideaux.”

“Roger Prideaux ! I have heard of him from Baron Kelder. Yes, I will tell you the truth ; I have heard all concerning him. He will sit upon two stools, will he ? Then if he fall between them, he only is to blame. Let the magistrates settle the business as seemeth right to them.”

“But thou must not bear the sword in vain. Thou must see that they who judge, judge righteous judgment.”

She looked confidently into his face ; but he shook his head, and turned from her toward George Fox.

Fox answered the movement. “Thou must listen, Oliver ; for if thou listen not, thy conscience will give thee but a hard time of it. I know that of thee.”

At this moment the door opened and Odinel Kelder entered. He came without ceremony, having received such favour of Cromwell, and indeed being there that afternoon on an understanding of their mutual friendship.

Cromwell turned to him instantly. “Come you here, Baron Kelder. Know you this man and this young maiden ? ”

“Mr. Fox is known to me, and I give him my hand

gladly, knowing him also to be a good man. The young maiden I know not."

"I am the daughter of Roger Prideaux; and I have come here to speak with the man whom God has set over England, that he may try with his judgment whether my father be worthy of imprisonment or not."

"Truly, Roger Prideaux is a worthy man. I have said so to my Lord General before this. Mercy in his case, cannot err."

"I ask not for mercy; my father hath done nothing worthy of punishment. I ask," — and she looked straight into Cromwell's eyes, — "I ask thee for justice. And thou canst not judge justly if thou wilt not hear the truth."

"You are a brave maid, you are indeed; and you shall tell me the truth, and I will see how it fits with what my friend Kelder has said before."

She looked then into Kelder's face, and that moment the baron forgave his son for loving her. Beginning at that fatal day when John de Burg begged his life at her hand, she told Cromwell the whole story. The words came with the force of simple truth. No oath and no witnesses could have certified them as she herself did, — her upright air, her clear eyes, her steady voice, her modest confidence.

When she ceased speaking Cromwell turned to Baron Kelder, and Kelder said instantly, "I believe that Mistress Prideaux has spoken no word that is not true." And he looked so kindly at her that she had to drop her eyes to hide the mist of grateful pleasure that gathered there. But Cromwell answered, "This is a judgment very difficult, besides being a business that nearly concerneth all good men that are loyal. I will take it into my own consideration."

“That is the utmost of my desire. The Lord chose thee to judge this nation; truly, then, *I* may put my confidence in thee.”

“I think so, I do indeed! I will see that none do Roger Prideaux wrong, though I judge him not altogether innocent, for I fear that his heart hath hankered after the man Charles Stuart. But for you, little maid, the Lord hath given you wisdom and comeliness, and, I doubt not, a knowledge of himself. Come, I will take you to those who will refresh you, for you are weary, indeed you are; and I have daughters also, — four of them, — whom God knows I love with a most tender love.”

All the sternness went out of his eyes, his face beamed; he stretched out his hand, and with a frank modesty Olivia laid her hand in it. As she did so she turned her pale, luminous face on Baron Kelder, saying:

“Thou didst bear a true witness. I am thy loving debtor for it.”

“Nay, then, you must pay my son Nathaniel in loving-kindness.” Cromwell had her left hand, she gave Kelder her right, and he bowed his head and touched the white palm with his lips, while Fox watched the little tableau with a gaze that had a blessing in it.

In a few moments the Protector returned to his visitors, and his first words had an irritable tone in them. “What is your concern now, George? You are ever a hard preacher.”

The two greatest men of their day stood side by side, searching each other with glances that went beyond all visibles. “My concern, Oliver, is no less than the lives of the two thousand Quakers in prison for conscience’ sake; and if the question is too hard for thee, so much more the pity of it! If it be a cross — ”

“Talk you of the cross, as if a Quaker had a special bearing of it? I trow not. I also have crosses on the one side and the other, I am sure. And, also, better men than myself bearing burdens for England, with small thanks. Listen to this, and let Quakers learn therefrom the patience I wish they had, — I am sure I do.”

Then he took from his pocket a letter, and opened it with some passion. “Here is a man that knew his calling from the first to this day. What man has discharged his duty better than Robert Blake? Has he not driven away the Dutch, and made Popish kings do right to Protestants, and the Pope himself pay twenty thousand pistoles good penance money, and taught justice to the deys of Tunis and Tripoli? — a hard lesson truly; and yet in the midst of all these triumphs he writes thus to me: he writes with tears, he does indeed, out of a mind troubled and a body sick as ever was, yet withal as a man fearing God very bravely. I tell you the Quakers are the Little-Faiths of their generation. Tell them that, George, and also tell them what Robert Blake says in his weakness and triumph;” and he stood still and struck the paper with his right hand, before he read the words aloud:—

“‘My only comfort is that we have God to lean upon, although we walk in darkness and see no light, — consoling myself in the mean time in the Lord, and in the firm purpose of my heart with all faithfulness and sincerity to discharge the trust reposed in me.’

“I tell thee, George Fox, I myself have a service fullest of trials ever poor creature was set upon. The cross! The cross! Surely, if we turn ourselves upward or downward, without or within us, everywhere the cross is always waiting.”

“Thy words do not meet the witness of my conscience.”

“George Fox, Quaker consciences are too troublesome. I protest they are. Under this pretence they will not fight, nor will they pay tithes, nor will they swear. So many scruples! Such bad principles! Such provokingly good practice! I know not — no, nor doth any other know — what is best to give them. I would they could at least suffer in silence. I say, suffer in silence.”

“Testimonies are required of them. Thou knowest well that there is not one instance in which even the weakest woman has denied or concealed her faith for fear of man’s scorn, or the torture of the flesh. Bear in thy mind, also, that many of these sufferers are thy old comrades, — fierce, strong, brave men, such as thou didst make them; yet when did any of them revenge himself? Verily, not one.”

“If they would speak what any man might know! But this doctrine is full of hidden things, — of mysticism.”

“Out of the steel ranks of thy own Ironsides have come the mystics of England. These men who have laid down their swords for Christ’s sake once followed thee through many a red lane of battle. And though God permitteth thee to be merciful, doubtless persecution is of his will. For ’t is a deep plough, Oliver; it goes to the bottom of a man’s nature. It goes far below all dogma. It goes below even the senses and the appetites. It summons the soul to do battle against the arm of flesh. Verily, I have seen the black heart of the sensualist burned clean and white in this fire.”

“Then, George, if it be such a fire of God’s kindling, I will not put it out; I will not, indeed.”

They had been walking as they talked together, and

had passed out of the smaller room into the great hall. Some one was at one of the organs, and through all their conversation a soft fugue had kept up a mysterious and melodious dialogue. Suddenly there was an intrusion of metallic sounds, the clash of cymbals and tinkle of triangles, and accompanying these the roll of a drum. Cromwell became silent and stood still, listening. In some occult way the half-barbaric sounds carried each mind far off to lands near sunrising, and while the spell lasted a clear voice in musical recitative filled the hall :

“Belshazzar the king gave a great feast to a thousand of his lords.”

With a white, stern face Cromwell heard, and then led the way back to the smaller room. He was strangely troubled. For a few minutes he did not speak, and neither Fox nor Kelder felt any impulse to break the strained silence. The strong voice rising and falling to the ebb and flow of the tingling, rolling waves of sound was still faintly audible. Kelder stood as if listening to its echoes. Fox was listening also, but not to any echo of mortal sound. Cromwell broke the pause in a voice that had a singular unreality about it.

“’T is beyond our knowing,” he said, “where dreams come from ; yet ’t is beyond my doubting that I dreamed last night of the king Belshazzar and the hand that wrote his death-warrant. Verily, it is the unseen that terrifies us, Kelder. It was not the hand, but the hand being without the body, that froze the king and nobles with unearthly terror. Come, let us go and eat, for I am weary with many thoughts and cares.”

They passed without further words into a more private part of the palace, and entering a room saw Olivia sitting between Bridget Ireton and Mary Fauconberg, the Protector’s daughters. The Lady Elizabeth Cromwell stood

at the spread table, but her eyes were fixed upon Olivia, whose face had an expression of holy enthusiasm upon it. There was evidently an interruption; but no allusion was made to the circumstance until the whole party sat in the summer twilight.

Then the Lady Cromwell said to her husband, "My dear, your coming in prevented our full knowledge of the finest words ever I did hear; and I think Mistress Prideaux will do us all great service if she make us audience to them."

Every one looked at Olivia, and with a slightly heightened colour she said, "They were the last words of James Naylor, who truly died for the truth, though men perceived it not for the veil of mortal frailty. Yet in the end, God suffered him the glory and peace of his presence."

"Naylor! The man was adjudged by the best in the land to be a blasphemer against God," answered Cromwell; but his speech was slow and heavy.

"The best in the land!" cried Fox. "Were they indeed the appointed keepers of God's honour? Thou knowest better, Oliver. 'T was a matter of conscience, and belonged to God's tribunal."

"His claim was beyond humanity, George."

"His punishment was beyond humanity. Foolish women, led away by the marvellous beauty of his comely countenance and by the music of his eloquent tongue, gave him honour he never claimed. Doubtless he ran out foolishly into imaginations, but he said not that he was Christ; only, that Christ dwelt within him. Such a word was too great to be carnally judged." And Fox looked upward, as if appealing to the God of justice.

"God may pardon such judges, but I would surely

mete them their own measure," said Baron Kelder, — "the red-hot iron through the tongue and on the brow, and the six hundred and twenty lashes which tore the body till the flesh would scarce hold the vital organs. 'T was an infamy of cruelty fathered upon the God of mercy and the Lamb who taketh away the sins of the world. And there was none to pity him."

"Odinel Kelder, I was in close prison myself at the time. Had I been a free man, I would have besought our kind Oliver for the mercy that is truly in his heart. I would have pleaded for James Naylor with both God and man."

"He went too far, George, he did indeed; and he deserved some punishment, he did, — I say so. Yet truly I interfered, even to the checking of Parliament with stiff words, about James Naylor."

"Well, then, he is now with God."

"I knew not that he was dead."

"Yea, gone away from all who loved and all who hated him and did him wrong. His end was in great peace, and in the passing over he breathed forth his soul in music, — slowly, with his mutilated tongue, speaking the great words in his adoring soul. Olivia, let us hear the last thoughts of this blasphemer, whom the Parliament of England thought it did well to torture."

Then Olivia stood up, and resting one hand on Fox's shoulder, she repeated the hymn to which James Naylor dismissed his soul.

"There is a spirit which I feel that delights to do no evil, nor to revenge any wrong, but delights to endure all things in hope to enjoy its own in the end.

"It sees to the end of all temptations.

"As it bears no evil in itself, so it conceives none in thoughts to any other.

"If it be betrayed, it bears it; for its ground and spring is the mercy and forgiveness of God.

“Its crown is meekness.

“Its life is everlasting love unfeigned.

“It takes its kingdom with entreaty, and not with contention, and keeps it by lowliness of mind.

“In God alone it can rejoice, though none else regard it or can own its life.

“It is conceived in sorrow, and brought forth without any to pity it.

“Nor doth it murmur at grief and opposition.

“It never rejoiceth but through suffering, for with the world’s joy it is murdered.

“I found it alone, being forsaken.

“I have fellowship therein with them who lived in dens and desolate places of the earth.

“Who through Death obtained the Resurrection and Eternal Holy Life.”

To these majestic words Olivia’s sympathetic voice rose and fell in musical cadence. Her eyes sought heaven, and her face was like the glowing page of some holy book. Kelder kept back tears with difficulty; Oliver’s sorrow-laden eyes were cast down with the trouble in them; Fox’s face and attitude were that of triumphant rejoicing. But no one made any comments. Indeed, the first word spoken was irrelevant to the matter.

“What name did George Fox call you by, little maid?”

“I am named Olivia.”

“For this life we have the same name, — Olivia.” He said the word slowly, with a lingering, gentle emphasis. “My daughter, know you the secret, sacred name, — the new name of His adoption?” They looked at each other steadily, as if seeing with that sight which cleaveth flesh and blood and discerns spiritually.

Then Cromwell dropped her hand, and walked on to the terrace with Odinel Kelder; and the women bade Olivia and Fox farewell, with all the pleasant confusion and iterated words that are the womanly conception of the rite.

Olivia was exceedingly weary, but so upheld by the certainty of Cromwell's interference in her father's case that she did not desire to rest until she had written to Hannah Mettelane, in whose letter she put these few lines to Nathaniel:—

MY DEAREST HEART,— This is to tell thee that all has gone well, and that we leave London for Sandys in two days. Mistress Caroline Peel and her daughter Sybil return in our company to the north. Nathaniel, know truly that all the space between us is full of loving thoughts for thee. I say thy name often, and whenever it passes my lips I kiss it on them for thee. To-day I saw thy father with Cromwell, and the meeting was pleasant; but I surely think that I shall see thee ere thou see him. For Cromwell stays him in London for love, but love so much stronger hastens me back to Sandys and to thee. So then, am I not, as I have truly promised to be, ever thine

OLIVIA.

XII.

ANASTASIA'S MARRIAGE.

“ Good smiters when help is needed, though the feeble bend to the blow ;
Men who when Evil bares before them his hindmost teeth, fly gaily to
meet him, in companies or alone.”

“ No wailer before ill-luck, one mindful in all he did
To think how his work to-day would live in to-morrow's tale.”

“ Marriage a slavery beyond enduring,
But that 't was of her own procuring.”

“ Women are governed by a stubborn fate :
No merit their aversion can remove,
No ill requital can efface their love.”

AFTER the receipt of Olivia's letter, Nathaniel was at Sandys every day. Lady Kelder showed her disapproval in many familiar ways ; but, as she complained to Jael, “ he bows to me, and then takes the road. If it had been Mary Bellingham, or Alice Singleton, or Ruby Halliday, I could have made shift to endure it.”

“ Nay, my Lady. You would have thought Mistress Bellingham gave my young master but half a heart, the other half being with Charles Stuart ; and Mistress Singleton is full cousin, and not to be thought of ; and Mistress Halliday hath the dream of the Fifth Monarchy Men, and would be like enough to keep us all in hot water with the Commonwealth.”

“ Then a God's mercy ! why should he marry any one ? And here also is the baron dallying his time

away at Oliver's court, — a fine court truly! — and I a poor lonely lady as ever bore the name."

"The Lord General delays the Baron from kind memories. Few that push themselves into high places are so humble-minded, my Lady."

"High places! Yes, he hath a high place; and I wish him as much joy in it as he has right to it. Those Cromwells patron to Kelder! It passes my understanding."

"To be sure 't is so; but in worst extremes we may remember ourselves, that blow wind ever so fast, it will have to lower itself ere long. To-morrow is untouched my Lady."

"It is not untouched, Jael. To-day prophesies for to-morrow. To-day we love and we plan, and to-morrow we have the outcome. Yes, indeed; and the thing intended brings with it many a thing not intended. I have had sorrows, Jael, in the past; and I know how past sorrows breed present ones."

"My Lady, I would n't carry next year, and the year after, on your heart. Wherever to-day's comforts come from, to-morrow's will come also. There is always the 'wherewith' for the want. And many a God's-penny you have for the days to come; so I would n't take on over miscomforts clear and sheer gone forever. All of us stand in hand to look forward, and not backward. 'T was yesterday only, when young master sat making the flies for his trout-fishing, I heard him singing some words that set me thinking so."

"Your young master hath the song ever on his tongue now; that is because he is thinking of — somebody."

"I should n't wonder, my Lady. I never knew any one sing that thought about themselves. Dismal work that, and nothing to sing about. My young master hath

a fine voice, and I warrant he made a sweet music to the words as ever I heard."

"Love words, doubtless, Jael?"

"Not they, — but wise words, as you shall hear, my Lady, —

"Weep no more, nor sigh, nor groan,
Sorrow calls no time that 's gone:
Violets plucked, the sweetest rain
Makes not fresh nor grow again.'"

"And anon he tuned up gayly, and sang of, —

"Spring, the sweet spring,
The year's pleasant king,
And the lark's silver
Leer-a-leer! Leer-a-leer!"

"'T was a good sight to me, and I stood idling a ten minutes watching and listening to him."

"Ah, Jael, my son hath a sweet temper and a noble heart."

"And a noble presence, my Lady. As he sat there, singing in the sunshine, he looked wondrous like you."

"He hath truly a look of me, and it does not hurt him. He is away to Sandys again, Jael."

"I fear, then, he will get a wetting ere he get back. Listen to the quails in the juicy corn, crying, 'Wet my feet!' If they'd satin slippers on, they could n't make more fuss about a drop of rain. Come, my Lady, be well at ease. The baron will be here anon; and for the other matter, as you cannot manage it, you may just as well leave it."

She had been dressing her lady's hair as she talked, and with these final words she handed her a little silver-framed mirror to inspect her arrangement.

"I think it will do, Jael. Bring me my second-best house-gown; surely the baron will arrive to-night." And

in this hope she dressed herself, letting her jealous, angry thoughts of Nathaniel drift away on its happier tide.

It was on this afternoon — the fifth after the receipt of Olivia's letter — that Nathaniel saw her waiting for him. The sky had become cloudy, and the quail's fretful fear was on the point of being realized; but Nathaniel thought the slight, white-robed figure, standing with uncovered head in the gray light, fairer for the sombre atmosphere surrounding it.

They met without words, for their eyes had a quicker speech. But oh, how full were the hours that followed! What confidences! What silences! Nathaniel learned over again every changing light and shadow on her sweet face. And his love-fraught gaze upon her was like sunshine on flowers. It brought the rose into her cheeks, the light into her eyes. It suffused her smiles, her low words, her shy looks with such responsive love that the afternoon went like a moment, and it was sunset, dark and rainy, before they had well begun their story.

On that same afternoon the baron said his farewell to Cromwell. He was then at Whitehall, and thither Kelder went, with a melancholy sense that it was the last earthly interview with his old comrade. In London the day was fine and clear, but Cromwell was in one of the darkest of those dark moods which clouded the latter part of his life. The baron found him wandering through the empty rooms of Whitehall, musing upon the discord and disunion in the ranks of his party, and he said bitterly to Kelder, "All is but vanity, — vanity and vexation of spirit."

"His loving-kindness faileth not."

"I am in the shadows, Odinel, — soul-shadows, if I may say so; they fall where they please, without regard to the

sun. Many things press sore on me. I live as it were in the fire." And he began to complain sadly of the religious chaos of the time, — the Solemn League and Covenant Men, the Fifth Monarchy Men, the Presbyterians, the prelates, and the Independents, all asking but one question, Who shall get the living? "Truly, Odiel, the burden is heavy on me."

"Perhaps, then, Quakers are not so foolish as we deem them. Sure 't is the part of peace and wisdom to retreat from all these confusions to the Light Within. Perhaps, also, these men may weary of their contentions, and at eventide you may have the peace you have truly wrought for."

"'T is not to be hoped for; 't is not indeed. Many dogs have never killed their own mutton, but those who have begun to do so will not cease the bad charge of themselves. So 't is with men; many have meddled not with plots and politics, but those who have but once done so, 't will be extraordinary indeed if they cease their troubling."

Thus conversing they left the palace and walked into that royal avenue of elms which then adorned St. James's Park; and after a while they came to "that pretty garden house" which was then the abode of Milton, and in later days of Hazlitt and Jeremy Bentham. There were five persons present, and among them Sir Roger L'Es-trange, a bitter royalist but a great lover of music. He was playing the viol with Mr. Milton, and all were singing Shirley's grand lyric, —

"The garlands wither on your brow,
Then boast no more your mighty deeds;
Upon death's purple altar now,
See where the victor-victim bleeds:
All heads must come
To the cold tomb;
Only the actions of the just
Smell sweet and blossom in the dust."

Cromwell sat down, and at the last two lines his face kindled, and he sang them with a solemn enthusiasm. Then Mr. Milton went to the organ and there was sung a madrigal, and a canon of Lock's, and at the last the "Orpheus Hymn." And strange it was to see how even Sir Roger forgot his enmity in the fine harmonious sounds, and how men were at one in a musical part who were at sixes and sevens when it came to theology and politics.

The Protector and Kelder left before the impromptu concert was ended, and at the little gate on the Westminster side they bade each other farewell. Cromwell had become gloomy and silent as soon as they lost the last echo of the music. He said his farewell like one who was tired, and who felt the sudden return of some swift-gathering sorrow which he might forget for a moment, but never escape. Yet in spite of his gloom the man's parting smile was an actual phenomenon. It came from some sunny depth in his nature, and remained forever in the heart of the man who caught it; a wonderful smile, though he said with it, —

"If it be a last farewell, Kelder, I say it truly without grieving. Whenever He shall be pleased to call me I am prepared to dislodge. I am everywhere free."

And as the clashing gate parted them Kelder whispered, "I have seen the last of him. Oh, my old captain! Shall we meet again among the hosts of heaven? Truly, Michael the chief will welcome you for a brave comrade."

He hardly understood the passion of grief and admiration which melted his heart within him; but he felt how dear those are who have been our associates in any good or great work, and how specially dear if that memory is set in those noon-days of life when we were happy of heart and strong and willing in the day of our power.

He went thoughtfully through the city, noticing very little, and so by easy stages to Kelderby. Between Lancashire and Westmoreland there is a bleak country, so wild and desolate that even at this day the manufacturing villages perched on the hilltops affront its natural loneliness. Few people in Cromwell's time crossed it, but Kelder's nearest way home lay through the western portion. As his horse painfully picked his steps among bogs and bowlders, he saw four men toiling along before him. They were grave in gait, and, but for the want of swords, looked like disbanded Ironsides. They walked, too, like men having some earnest purpose; and when Kelder overtook them he asked if they had business that way.

"We have a great business on God's earth, yet not in men's market-places;" and then walking by Kelder's side they reasoned with him of righteousness and of judgment to come, and specially of that attractive doctrine of the Inward Light, alluring men by the infallibility of its guidance and the independence of its individuality.

One of the men was John Audland, a young Independent minister of great learning, who had joined Fox at his first appearing, and Kelder had some knowledge both of him and of his wife, the beautiful, wealthy, and pious Anne Newby. He gladly talked with him until they came to a lonely farmhouse at which the evangelists were to stay, and he never forgot John's parting words,—

"Odinel Kelder, if a prophet told thee to do some great thing, thou wouldst gladly obey him. Thou wouldst draw up truth from the deep, or bring it down from the heavens; but thou canst not believe it is within thee. Stretching out thy hands to an unknown God, thou heedest not the God in whom thou livest, and movest, and hast thy being."

It was sunset when they parted, and Kelder rode on, full of thought, until the gray hills and the gray clouds met, and the horizon was like a still sea. A lonely hostelry received him, and he was weary enough to have slept soundly ; but neither weariness nor the thought of home, now only a day's journey distant, could put aside the seriously transcendent words of John Audland. True, he had not Fox's imperial logic, but he had Paul's faith in his heart, and Paul's words on his tongue ; and Kelder, do as he would, could not rid himself of the great apostle's manifesto, " I live ; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me."

And then the wailing of a babe in the next room recalled the mystery of the Incarnation, and it was gray dawn when he went to sleep, with that same wonder in his heart that Richard Crashaw had just so eloquently expressed for him : —

" That He whom the sun serves should faintly peep
Through clouds of infant flesh ; that He the old
Eternal Word would be a child, and weep ;
That He who made the fire should feel the cold ;
That Heaven's high Majesty his court should keep
In a clay cottage, by each blast controlled ;
That Glory's self should serve our griefs and fears,
And free Eternity submit to years."

In the evening of the following day the baron reached Kelderby. There all things were as usual, but he heard that a small Lody of cavalry had taken up their quarters in Kendal. They had offered no information concerning their visit, and Kelder, though suspecting it, was equally reticent. The generality knew that Kendal and its vicinity was the home of many active royalists. Lord Derwent had recently fled to the king in France, and so men with bad consciences concerning their affection to the Commonwealth walked very softly, and kept their tongues

even from good, while those stern-looking Artegals walked silent and watchful up and down the quiet streets of their town.

De Burg heeded them very little. He knew more of forbidden knowledge than most of the citizens, and he was confident they were watching Strickland. For this young man had a certain bravery of his opinions, and a contempt for any equivocal hiding of them, which De Burg had often foretold would bring him into trouble. He expected every morning to hear of his arrest, and he was happy in the expectation; for he had not forgotten Strickland's contemptuous treatment, neither was he so much the friend of the king as to put the safety of his friends before the punishment of De Burg's enemies.

He had no knowledge of the baron's visit to London. Events happening in Silverdale took a long time to reach Kendal, especially in the haying season, and he saw Nathaniel frequently about the town, or on the highways. Even if a visit to Cromwell had suggested itself to his mind, he would have been certain that only Nathaniel could take it; but such an event never occurred to him as probable. He could break faith as suited his desire or his convenience, but he did not reflect that his own breach of honour cancelled the obligations of others.

Also, he had plenty of private business to attend to. Anastasia required more conciliation than he had ever before considered it necessary to give to any woman; and Chenage, having in a manner arranged his own happiness, was not concerned to redeem his promises to De Burg as promptly as De Burg expected and desired. He had been compelled to let the vessel belonging to Le Tall's friend sail without him, and in consequence had had to make two secret journeys to Whitehaven, in order to arrange with another captain.

But at length the £200 was paid, the ship waiting, and Anastasia gave that reluctant consent which necessity wrings from the unwilling heart. Chenage and De Burg wished the ceremony to be as private as possible, but Anastasia's nature demanded the support which a crowd of fellow-creatures was sure to give her. She felt that if she must transact this business of marriage it could be done with the least suffering to herself if the whole town was present to give her its admiration and approval.

And when she appeared on her bridal morning King Solomon in all his glory might well have been astonished at this young woman. Her dress of silver brocade had a stomacher of pearls; three rows of pearls encircled her throat; bracelets of pearls were around her arms; a golden comb set with pearls held back the veil of her flowing hair. Her neck and bosom were partly covered with a scarf of French lace, and a little apron of the same material was full of white roses. The moonlight radiance, the soft shimmer of her whole toilet, but intensified the brilliance of her beauty, — of eyes that flashed or languished as it pleased her; of cheeks that glowed like carnations; of an air at once resolved, daring, cajoling, and fascinating.

The sun shone with a brilliance that went to the heart; the bells were ringing as if each separate bell had a conscious, jubilant voice; the town had the air of a holiday, and as she went through it hearty hurrahs answered the bells, and women and children threw flowers into her coach, with loud-spoken admiration and good wishes.

All this tumult of bride-blessing was seriously disliked by Chenage. What had these crowds of men and women to do with his Anastasia? He was jealously

angry that they should appropriate any portion of his joy, or assume the right to look at his bride and express their interest in her beauty and happiness. A sullen gloom was in his eyes, even as he walked to the altar; but when Anastasia scattered her roses before it, and then turned to him with a smile, he forgot everything but the loveliness of the girl whose hand he took.

De Burg watched him with hearty suspicion and dislike. He had learned both to doubt and to detest him; and there had been hours lately in which Anastasia, had she known it, could have changed her fate by a tear or a caress. So near in life do two destinies often meet. The quiver of an eyelid might enable a soul to pass from misery to happiness; but ignorance of the fact makes the barrier insurmountable, beyond effort, and beyond hope. Anastasia would gladly have broken the chain of circumstances in which she was bound, but her evil genius stood watching her with sarcastic approval, always choosing the wrong moment, always taking the wrong method, in any effort she made for this end. And at last it was too late. She was the wife of Roger Chenage, and he soon let her understand her new position. In the church, with the wedding guests standing around, his first words to her had the tone of a command.

“Come, Asia!”

Only two words, but they were uttered with the peremptory air of a master, and De Burg looked at his daughter with a quick and angry inquiry. Did she wish him, even then and there, to answer for her? Anastasia met the unspoken sympathy with eyes full of meaning; there was defiance and strength and satisfaction in them, and for many a doubtful day De Burg rested himself in the confidence of that quick, assuring glance.

Wedding breakfasts are often but sorry affairs ; how often is their mirth fictitious, how often at the bottom of the laugh and the wine-cup is there some pretence, disappointment, or uncertainty. But there was at least the semblance of joy in De Burg Hall while Anastasia queened it a few hours longer in her father's house. She sat at the head of the feast, and all drank to her loveliness, and all praised her past and gave her good wishes for her future.

Chenage was little pleased at the secondary part he had to play. For he also was splendidly attired in ruby velvet and white satin, with ruby brooches fastening the white feathers in his hat and the satin points of his doublet. However, there are times when the surliest of mortals are compelled to pretend to the virtue they do not possess, and a man has an obligation at least to affect happiness on his wedding-day. So Chenage drank deeply, and laughed loudly, and complimented himself, until he attained a comfortable state of self-complaisance.

Early in the afternoon his carriage, drawn by six horses, drove up to De Burg for his bride. Anastasia saw it coming, and her heart sank within her. To hide her tears she fled to her room. There was some excuse made of necessary changes in her toilet, but with or without excuse she felt she could no longer play her part unless she were permitted a little space for entire abandonment of it. When she was surely alone, and the bolt drawn between her and the world, what a transformation there was ! She wrung her hands, she whispered passionate words of wrong and misery and hate. She forgot the waiting coach and the impatient bridegroom ; she felt nothing and cared for nothing but the outrageous and cruel mockery which had deprived her of freedom and driven her from the home where at

least she had been loved and indulged far beyond the women of her generation.

In such a tempest of sorrow she forgot time, she forgot the ostensible purpose for which she had sought her room. She was recalled to the facts of her present state by a sudden sense of tumult in the hall where the feast was spread. She stood up and listened intently, never doubting but that her father and her husband had at length found a good opportunity for the quarrel latent between them. A feeling of satisfaction sent smiles to her lips and a wicked dancing light to her eyes. She began to unfasten the white knot on her brocaded shoe, and to count the pearls with which the instep was ornamented, asking herself the while, "What need to hurry?" If Chenage was getting his first lesson, she would give her father time to make it a very thorough one.

"One, two, three, four large pearls, and eleven small ones. I must have lost one. What is the matter? I swear they are fighting! That is my father's voice, and, by my soul! I like not its tone."

She instantly clasped the shoe on her foot again and went swiftly back to the wedding guests. All was in an uproar, and De Burg stood foaming with passion under the iron grip of two soldiers. Six others stood at the door; and their captain, a stern old man, insensible to all earthly voices but such as gave an order, was reading to De Burg the particular one under which he was acting. It was Cromwell's own, and De Burg in his fury spit at it.

Anastasia needed no explanation. She clung to her father with tears and passionate outcries; and when Chenage would have taken her in his own arms she turned on him with inconceivable rage, and vowed that

“he, and only he, had been the deceiver and the betrayer of her father.” Her beauty, her rich apparel, her despairing love and grief for her father, her withering contempt for her husband, her reckless scorn for Cromwell and all of Cromwell’s doings, her vehement expressions of loyalty to the king, invested the girl with an insolence and a splendor of defiance which touched nearly every man in the room.

Le Tall fidgeted from window to window. The soldiers glanced from under dropped eyelids, and were as sorry for her as they dared be for such an incarnation of the world and the flesh. Only the grim Ironside reading Cromwell’s order was indifferent to the vision of carnal loveliness. He indeed looked at Anastasia for a moment, but it was with repulsion; and though she turned to him with eyes swimming with tears, he gave the order for De Burg’s removal as resolutely as if he had been made invulnerable to the sweet influences of womankind.

There were reasons for such insensibility. During his stay in Kendal he had made himself familiar with the nature, the history, and the life of the De Burgs. He read Anastasia as if her face was a printed book. He had watched all of De Burg’s movements; he had fathomed the depth of his turpitude. He had heard and comprehended the whole affair relating to Roger Priedeaux. He thought no better of Anastasia than of her father. Her beauty was the Devil’s beauty, and he saw behind it the cruel heart and the false tongue. Silly men might fall into her snares, but Captain Giles Quaritch — never!

Having read aloud the order under which he acted, he gave the word of command. Then Le Tall stepped forward and said, —

“Captain, consider if herein bail may not be taken. I would myself do much.”

“It may not even be put to the question, sir. I act upon first orders.”

“At leastwise suffer your prisoner to see his daughter away, and to make some arrangements concerning his household.”

“There needs no more ordering of it. He was ready to leave England for France this sunset had he not been interrupted in his intentions.”

“Take you him to Lancaster Castle or to London!”

“He goeth to Appleby jail, until the assize settle the quality of his guilt.”

There was a moment of high-strung silence, a sharp cry, and Anastasia fell senseless at her father's feet. Some women-servants were called, and they carried the insensible bride into an adjoining room.

She came back to consciousness in a fit of hysterical weeping which she was unable to control. It ended in a deep sleep, and the afternoon was far advanced when she awakened. An ominous stillness was in the house. Refusing all assistance, she rose and went to the dividing door and opened it. The table was still covered with the remains of the feast, but the guests had all gone. The hateful Parliamentary soldiers had also left, and they had taken her father away with them. To Appleby! The word rung in her ears as if it was beat upon a thousand anvils. Pale and distraught, she stood in the doorway gazing upon the deserted banquet. Chenage soon disturbed her reverie.

“Come, Mistress,” he said. “If you are yourself again, we will go home. This house is worse than a nightmare.”

“I will stay here until my father comes back.”

“I promise you will be at Chenage before you eat or sleep again. Three of my men are on the coach; be pleased to say if you will use their feet or your own.”

Then she resolutely called her soul to duty. She saw that he would willingly humiliate her if she permitted him the opportunity, and she answered, “I am ready. Go when you will.”

“Take off that finery; pearls are not bought for a penny or two. You may lose them.”

“You bought them not. They are the De Burg pearls.”

“They were. They are now mine.”

“If they are now yours, then I will never wear them more. Here!” And she snatched them from her neck and arms and bosom, and flung them on the floor at his feet. Then turning from him, she sent one of her women for her cloak and another for her hood, and before Chenage had gathered and put safely into his pockets the precious beads she was ready for the journey.

The afternoon was well on, and the road rough and lonely. The hills soon shut them in, and as the sun set the mist came swooping down and wrapped them in its damp, depressing atmosphere. Anastasia sat gazing inward, backward, forward, — anywhere but on the man at her side; and the servants, who had expected wine and mirth and wedding gifts, sat silent also, wondering and disappointed. Chenage made several attempts to conciliate his bride, for he felt both wounded and mortified; but Anastasia was as one who heard not. Her fine wedding-dress gleamed in the gathering darkness, but she took no heed of it, though it caught the dust of the highway and the damp and tarnish of the mist and the mud and water of the rocky becks.

It was nine o'clock when they reached Chenage

Grange, but the summer twilight cast a pallid, mournful light, making all things unreal and shadowy. She glanced up at the house as they approached it, and sighed heavily. It stood gauntly among melancholy moors in the midst of a grove of decaying trees. There was a garden in front of it, but it was fallen into neglect, and made sorrowful by the shuddering gloom of its numerous yew-trees. A doleful house, haunted by memories of evil-doing and wraiths of unredeemed wrong.

A number of servants, old men and women, stood in the hall to receive their new mistress. There were some candles in the wall sconces, but they made only a dull light in the large empty place. Still it was enough for Anastasia to see the gray stooping figures of her new domestics as they parted to let her pass between them.

Trailing her lustrous dress, with a head proudly lifted, and sad eyes seeing nothing but the steep stairway up which Chenage preceded her, Anastasia entered her new home. Two old men soon afterward put out the lights, and as they did so they shook their heads at each other with a prophetic intelligence of sorrow. When this duty was done they hobbled back to the kitchen fire, where the women, not yet too old to be envious of the bride's beauty, and angry at her for neglecting their special claim upon her notice, sat muttering of evil portents.

But Anastasia had at this hour no thought of conciliation, no wish for sympathy. The presumption of youth had told her that she should "always dwell in painless towers," and it was hard for her all at once to be forced to endure both the present and the oncoming pang, and to acknowledge to herself that she must bear her destiny as best she could, knowing well the resistless might of necessity.

XIII.

OLIVIA AND ANASTASIA WANTED.

“When a wrong idea possesses any woman much bitterness flows from her.”

“See how faithless is the female race — and ye are partners in what has been done.”

TO be content with little is hard ; to be content with a great deal is almost impossible. While Kelderby was nearly lost, Lady Kelder had made but very modest demands upon the future ; now that there was no strange finger upon its title-deeds, she was conscious of more comprehensive expectations. After the baron’s return she went about her fair old home with something of the same elation which had made her as a bride so proudly happy, so gratefully aware of her fine position. Then the care that had been second became prime, and she felt that it was impossible to be content unless Nathaniel could be induced to give up Olivia.

“And I look to fight this battle alone, Jael,” she said ; “for as the baron grows old, he grows more careless in particulars. I trow he would make the narrow road to heaven wide enough for all sorts of men, even such as the Quakers.”

“I think, my Lady, you are such an one as would like a great company with you on heaven’s highway. Maybe them as wants to go there alone won’t get there at all.”

“Jael, I am not a bigot, and you know it ; but I do like people to be either saints or sinners.”

“Not in nature, my Lady. There be plenty of shades between white and black, and twilight comes between day and night, — middling kinds everywhere.”

“Then I will none of them. The Rev. Mr. Duttred says that Quakers have neither churches nor priests nor creeds, being all in themselves. If a man is a Christian, he has a creed. You know that, Jael.”

“Indeed, my Lady, if men must learn theology ere they learn Christ, our blessed heaven will be empty, — I know that; and ’t is most sure that the Quakers pattern their lives after Christ. On Prideaux’s estate there be none poor, and the old and the sick want neither help nor comfort. Mistress Prideaux taught old John of Scraffel Fell to read his Bible, and ’t is a common report that she pays Dame Boyd to teach the lads and lasses day by day.”

“Small thanks to her. I like not people educated above their wits. Fill a cup beyond what it will hold, and it slops over to no decent purpose; and I can tell you this, Jael, the little cups are very plenty.”

“True, my Lady.”

On the very night of his return home the baron had told Lady Kelder of Olivia’s interview with the Protector. “A lovely girl,” he said, “who affected his spiritual nature in the same way as a beautiful view affected his eye.”

“Who was with her? How was she dressed? What was her behaviour?”

“She came into the presence with George Fox. Her dress was of a rich dark satin; her head was uncovered; her hands were dropped and lightly clasped. She hath a very comely face, and great wisdom and composure.”

“I will warrant the ‘composure,’ for I must tell you I went to call upon her, being anxious, for Nathaniel’s sake, to see if there was any good thing in her. Com-

posure! Faith! she was like a marble woman; and I vow, as I am Lady Kelder, that she almost dismissed me her presence."

"Nay, then —"

"Oh, I mean not in so many words, but she rose up and asked if I would eat or drink, and the motion so fit into my own mood that I followed it and rose also without consideration. I have had a spite at myself ever since"

"I think, indeed, that Nathaniel might seek farther for a wife and find worse."

"I would rather he never married at all."

"Joan! Who, then, comes after him? Would you have Kelderby go to my second cousin Nicholas and his sons?"

"I hate Nicholas Kelder, but he is better than Olivia."

"Joan, you talk only from your lips outward. The girl is lovely and good and hath the likelihood of a fine estate. For my part, I wish no greater ill may ever come to Nathaniel than his full wish in the matter of Olivia Prideaux."

"I think she casts a spell over every man. If good King James were yet alive she would be counted a witch. And if she hath you on one side and Nathaniel on the other, pray shall I walk behind her?"

"You and I are one, Joan."

"Not if the Quakeress comes between us. And I tell you plainly, Odinel, I will not have her under this roof, nor yet will I give Swaffham for her use, nor will I ever give her welcome as Nathaniel's wife. Faith! for one so wondrous fair and wise the place is too small for her deserts."

This was the keynote of Lady Kelder's domestic mood, as that mood affected Nathaniel and Olivia. But

Nathaniel was a wise young man, and knew how to guide his affairs without making any offensive parade of his independence. Affection and reflection had alike taught him that there was neither honour nor self-respect in a victory of any kind over his mother. He could, despite of her, take his own way; but how unblessed and sad a way it would be if, in order to take it, he must tread under his feet even the prejudices of a heart so dear to him!

So though he went to see Olivia constantly, there was as little remark as might be concerning the visits. For life at Sandys had fallen into orderly grooves. Hannah Mettelane would suffer no usual duty to be neglected. The farm-men went about the haymaking and shearing and harvesting as if Roger was only on a journey and might be home at any hour. The confections and sweet waters were made in their order and season. The still-room was crowded with bowls and platters holding sweet herbs and brews. The atmosphere of the house was like a spice-garden, and the garden itself as gay as if it was an outgarth of Paradise.

Roger wrote once a week to his daughter and his sister. He made no complaint of suffering or ill-usage, and it was so natural to hope for the best that perhaps more was hoped than there was warrant for. But Roger's trial was to take place in September, and the time was always spoken of as that of "Roger's return."

One day toward the end of August, Nathaniel went to Sandys early in the afternoon. It was a hot day, full of brilliant sunshine. The shadows were diaphanously purplish, the winds were all at peace, and a mysterious calm brooded over the lonely land. Never had the long, rambling house had an air so homelike and so ancient. It seemed as much a part of the landscape as the distant

hills or the brawling trout-stream, which was one of its boundaries.

Between the garden and the park there was a row of sycamore trees, and in their amber shadows he tied his horse; for he expected Olivia to be in the garden, and he went up and down it looking for her. There was not a sound except the busy murmur of the bees around their hives, — straw skeps, full of the scent of mountain flowers and the aroma of pine woods. Near them was a trickling spring, and like sentinels around it the August lilies stood, — virgin flowers, exhaling the airs of heaven, and clad in the lawn of almost naked light.

As he gazed at them, spellbound by their sweet purity, he saw Olivia coming toward him. She also was clothed in white, and her tall, slight form and pale, radiant face gave her a strange similitude to the flowers. He hastened to meet her; he took her hands in his and led her to the shaded seat beside the fountain and the lilies. How full of meaning were their common words of courtesy! How eloquent her speaking face, her clear, candid eyes, the light touch of her hand upon his arm!

He spoke to her first of those ordinary mutual interests which he always found it well to use as introductory. For Olivia was no babbler and no complainer. The tendency of women with their lovers is to meet them with some tale of sorrow or of petty tyranny, and so to enlist either a true or an affected sympathy. Olivia would not so wrong herself; she was just, and would not wrong others; she trusted Nathaniel's love and knew that it could not be increased by sentimental complaining, nor made more tender by fictitious opposition. She would have scorned the love which required nurturing by means so false and contemptible.

So hitherto their courtship had been undimmed by un-

necessary complaining and tears. As for their real sorrows, they were discussed simply, without exaggeration, and in confidence with all who shared them. This afternoon, however, Nathaniel felt, rather than saw, some new cause of distress; but he waited patiently for Olivia to open her heart to him, and she was not in a hurry to cloud the calm rapture of their meeting. She listened to all his doings and plans, — his hopes of a return to Parliament, his militia honours and annoyances, his anxieties about his father's health, his pleasant sympathies in his mother's successes with her cosmetics and confections.

Then there was a little pause. Her head lay backward against the green wall of privet. Nathaniel clasped her hand. The warm, sweet garden was full of peace and fragrance; it was all their own. In their simple nearness to each other they were blissfully happy, but they did not tell each other so; for the sense of happiness which makes us silent is far superior to that which makes us eloquent, and Joy is shyer than Grief, — the heavenly visitant but flutters a moment between two hearts and is gone. Olivia broke the spell with a sigh, and then he heard the words he had been half fearing to hear, —

“Nathaniel, there hath been a sad letter from my father.”

‘ My dear heart! I felt it. Surely he is not ill? ’

“My father is well, but Asa Bevin is very sick indeed. I fear that he will not recover. Also, De Burg hath an inflammation, and is out of reason and beyond management.”

“De Burg ‘sick and in prison.’ That concerns me, Olivia.”

“I think so. My father is caring for him; but Asa is also in his charge, and I fear that the labour will be too

great for him. Nathaniel, I think that I ought to go to Appleby."

"I will go for you. 'Tis beyond reason that you should go. Also, I do not think that you would be let behind bars. And, my dear one, how could you bear it, if you were?"

"There are more than fifty women Friends now in common jails for conscience' sake. Many of them are even more delicately nurtured than I. And Asa is not only Asa. There is One who deigns to hold Asa's sufferings as his own. I cannot have him say to my heart, 'I was sick, and ye visited me not.' How could I bear such a reproach?"

"What says Mistress Mettelane?"

"She thinks that going before our set time is but a forcing of Providence. But, Nathaniel, my dear one, she hath the making of the elderflower wine on her hands, and she cannot see how a greater duty must put by a lesser one. Her conscience is very tender, but it is near-sighted. What is far off, or what is far away, troubles it not."

"In general it is a good spirit. Sufficient unto the day is the care of the day; and in this matter I think you may be guided by your aunt. I will go to Appleby; I will go at once."

"I cannot take 'think.' I must be sure. And not any one, not even *thee*, dear Nathaniel, *can* do my duty for me."

"Well, then?"

"I will seek clearness and counsel this night, and the way He shows me I will take, however strait it be."

"Oh, Olivia! You do not know what a jail is; even to see its horrors, will terrify you."

"Many of my sisters are living in its horrors. I wish

not to pass my days more at ease in this world than Christ passed his, — than those bearing his testimony have the measure of.”

“But, dearest, this jail is a very valley of death.”

“The snares of life are greater than the fears of death. And thou knowest that there is a life unknown, hid from men, but most intimate with God. This life is indifferent to its surroundings. It is as possible in Appleby jail as in this fair garden of Sandys. A dear friend who visited my father told him that while lying in the common jail at Dover Castle he knew the glory of this hidden life. ‘Roger,’ he said, ‘as I lay upon my bed of straw in a comfortable sleep and rest, the hand of my God fell upon me, and his sweet and comforting presence awakened me, and so continued with me unto the morning watch; and my soul was filled with his living presence, as with a mighty river, so that nothing appeared but joy and gladness.’ This also is my God, and I have waited for him. So thou seest this life hid with God is not dependent on outward circumstances. And if I would keep peace at home, — that is, in my own soul, — I must not wrong my conscience. In the morning, come, and I will go with thee, or send by thee; I am ready, as the way is opened.”

“I will come. What are the particulars concerning my cousin De Burg?”

“He hath been unmanageable from the first, and hath drunk much wine. Now he knows not anything, and my father thinks him to be in a very bad condition.”

“A sharp sauce has De Burg got himself with the cursedness of his own way.”

“Thou shouldst not reproach the unhappy. The hand of God is upon them.”

He could oppose her will no longer. Her holy eyes

pleaded with him, — nay, they commanded him, and he felt obliged to heed them.

But it was with an anxious and sorrowful heart that he returned to Kelderby. The baron and Lady Kelder had been talking of their son and Olivia Prideaux, and Lady Kelder was angry at what she considered the sinful indifference of her husband. But Kelder had come to that time of life when he did not care to be continually meddling with what he could not mend; and he knew his son well enough to be sure that passionate disapproval and sharp words would not change him.

“Dear heart,” he said, “you are wide and foolish in your conjectures when you guess at Nathaniel’s temper. You would succeed better with fewer and kinder words, constantly yet not perversely urged. Where one cannot drive a nail, Joan, it is often possible to put in a screw.”

But women, as a rule, prefer to fasten their opinions with the nail; and on this night the method appeared a peculiarly good one to Lady Kelder. She was in that impatient mood which cannot endure suspense. She wanted to know the best and the worst of the matter, — if there was any best in it; and when she turned to the opening door which admitted Nathaniel, the inquiry in all its aggressive indignation was on her face.

Nathaniel was dusty and weary, for he had ridden hard, and there was in his countenance and air a sense of trouble which displeased and piqued his mother. She felt at once that it referred to Sandys. Nathaniel always brought trouble home by that way. She looked pointedly at his disordered toilet, and Nathaniel nervously announced his intention of renewing it before he ate. She permitted him to do so without dissent. He would have given the Quakeress so much respect, she was sure, and she would not have one tittle less for her own part. But

she atoned for this strict demand of the anise and cummin due to affection by ordering him just the refreshment she knew he would enjoy. And she welcomed him to it with smiles, and served the food with her own hands.

Nathaniel showed his pleasure and gratitude by lifting her face to his own and kissing it. She almost forgave him everything in that gentle act, until she reflected that he had probably just kissed also "that Quaker girl." The thought chilled her at once. She sat down, and waited for her opportunity.

The baron had laid aside his book and was walking up and down the fast-darkening room. Something in his son's face and manner had impressed him, as well as Lady Kelder, with a sense of unpleasant news; and he had been listening to her anticipations of more trouble with a presentiment that they were true.

"Where have you been, Nathaniel?"

"I have been to Sandys, Father."

"Of course. His horse goes as naturally to Sandys, Baron, as it goes to its manger."

Nathaniel glanced at his mother's darkening face, but made no answer. The baron said "Chut!" impatiently, and stood in the middle of the room, looking at his son.

"We are expecting ill news from you, Nathaniel, and, as all seasons are seasonable for men to be anxious and unhappy, deliver it without preliminaries."

"De Burg is very ill. He has lost his reason, and is, I think, like to die."

"Well, then, only death restrains wicked men from doing more mischief."

"Dear mother, he is of our kin. He is alone, and sick, and in prison. You know what I ought to do."

“You ought to leave him alone, and sick, and in prison. Never does God Almighty give the wicked their desert in this world but some one, out of a spurious and unrighteous pity, must interfere with the Almighty’s justice. Leave De Burg alone. There are poisonous families as there are poisonous reptiles; the De Burgs hurt all who come nigh them.”

“What is your thought, Nathaniel?”

“I think, Father, that I ought to go to Appleby, and see that our cousin hath proper care. If a good man is sick, God makes his bed for him, and then how can it choose but be well made, and be made to please him? But the sick-bed of a bad man, without earthly friends or heavenly friends! Sure, it is a piteous case, Father. What say you?”

“If your conscience bids you go, Nathaniel, you get your orders from headquarters. I dare not give you counter-orders. Only be sure that you feel what you think, or else you lie to yourself.”

“It seems to me, Baron, that your religion is for use in some other life than this one. When God punishes our enemies we have plenty of warrant for rejoicing in their punishment.”

“An eye for an eye, truly, in the Old Testament. But, Joan, we have come not unto Sinai, but unto Mount Zion and the gospel of peace and good-will.”

“Was it indeed good-will that made Paul strike Elymas blind? and Saint Peter slay Ananias and Sapphira for a sin which Peter himself had been guilty of in a worse kind? Was it a gospel of good-will that made the disciples forbid the Syro-Phœnician woman? Yet they also had come under the dispensation of Mount Zion.”

“They were but men, dear Joan. Let us look higher. What of the works of Jesus Christ? Were they not all

saving works? It is not Paul, not Peter, but Christ, that we must copy."

"It seemeth to me that it goes harder with saints than sinners on all hands."

Neither Nathaniel nor the baron answered her. They were both capable of that restraint which is characteristic of real strength. Nathaniel was sure of his duty, and the baron was not inclined to tamper with either his own or his son's conscience. He had come to those reasonable years when the forces of the senses and the body retire into the mind. For the evening of a good life brings its lamp with it, and by this light Baron Kelder saw many things clearly that he had not seen at all when his natural sight was keen and undimmed. So, understanding there was no wisdom like silence, he held his peace, and continued his soft, slow walk up and down the room. But his manner was that of one who has examined a subject and decided upon it.

"Our good is what does us good, and we are not innocent if we harm ourselves. I don't think the Almighty objects if we care a little for our own welfare. There is always fever in a jail, and I think, Baron, you and Nathaniel ought to remember that."

"Asa Bevin is very ill with jail fever."

The words cost Nathaniel an effort. He felt that he ought to have spoken of Asa, and of Olivia's desire to go to Appleby, before he discussed the case of De Burg. Now he must suffer — almost righteously — the suspicion sure to follow his belated honesty. Lady Kelder looked quickly at him, and he was still innocent and ingenuous enough to blush for his want of candour.

"Is the Quaker Prideaux sick also?"

"He is well, but he is worn out with nursing both Asa and De Burg."

“Is the Quakeress going to Appleby?”

“’T is yet uncertain. Her aunt is opposed to the journey until the set time arrives. Olivia Prideaux has not yet heard ‘the Voice’ she waits for.”

“Notify the girl by day-dawning that you are going. You will see then that she will hear what she desires to hear. Nathaniel, I would have taken the shame and wrong more easily had you given it to me with honesty. ’T is a most evil journey that De Burg has to be cloak for.”

She felt that there was enough of truth in this accusation to warrant it. It gave her a justifiable cause of reproach, and honourable exit from a position hard to maintain. Yet she left the room dissatisfied with herself, and convinced—though she had prevented Nathaniel from convincing her—that her son was innocent of the deception she affected to believe in.

Silence followed her departure. The baron sat down in his chair and closed his eyes. He had the attitude of a man who, having come near to his journey’s end, has ceased to interest himself about the peculiarities of the road. Nathaniel moved away from the table. A servant came in with lights, another carried out the used platters and broken meat. There was not a word spoken, but the silence was a restful one; it made no impression of ill-feeling upon those who were unconcerned in it; it fell upon Nathaniel’s fretted heart like a cool shadow.

He was the first to break its spell. “Father, I shall leave early in the morning. To my mother say all for me that you think kind and right.”

“Yes, yes. But she loves you, Nathaniel,—and she suffers.”

“I wish she would not take or make trouble on this subject.”

“If she could forget that you are her son, it would be possible. Would you wish it?”

“God forbid! Do you object to my caring for De Burg?”

“I thank you for it. If you go not, then I shall go myself. I was wondering if Mistress Chenage knew of her father’s sickness.”

“I deem it unlikely. Roger Prideaux would not write to her. There is no one else to do so.”

“I will write her a letter to-morrow. Luke Tyson can carry it.”

“’T is a kind thought. Since her marriage I have not seen her. Before, ’t was a strange day if she was not on Kendal streets.”

“I know not Roger Chenage, but his father had an ill name. Hard men are the Chenages, — and have been.”

He said the words musingly, and Nathaniel did not reply to them. A reluctance to converse, a disposition to reflection, would not be put aside by any matter of conversation; and both men were so frank with themselves and with each other as to admit and welcome this strange central longing for rest. For as the whirlwind has its heart of peace, so the truest life, though in a vortex of wheeling, restless cares, has also its innermost cell into which it retires when it is weary, in order that it may be alone with that — call it by whatever name we will — which is not self.

Nathaniel left Kelderby so early next morning that he was at Sandys in time for breakfast. He had no need to ask for Olivia’s decision; the preparations for the journey were evident. Aunt Hannah, a little flustered and worried, with her best dress turned back and pinned at the waist, was giving directions to the servants. The

coach was at the door, and two men were packing into it a number of those trivialities without which women do not travel. Olivia soon appeared in a gray duffle dress and cloak, and a hood of black silk upon her head.

“My dear Nathaniel!”

“You are going, then, Olivia?”

“I am sure it is my duty to go.”

“Maybe you are a bit opinion-tied in such matters, Olivia. Surely to goodness, if God Almighty wanted some help for Roger and Asa Bevin, he would be as likely to think of a middle-aged woman like Hannah Mettelane as of a slip of a girl who has n’t got her full strength yet. And I must say that the Lord has not given me any orders about going to Appleby.”

“Didst thou ask him for any, Aunt Hannah?”

“Nay, my dear lass, I did not. I do my day-by-day duty, content with the charge of it. Many shoulders ask for burdens they are n’t fit to bear.”

“But the cross is not to be passed, Aunt Hannah.”

“To be sure it is n’t. I never pass a cross that is in my way, Olivia; and I never go out of my way to find a cross. But you take after your father; you cannot be satisfied unless you are helping other people to bear their crosses. There, now! say no more. I am ready to go with you, though it is a bit hard to leave a house like this with servants. You know how they go higger-muggering about, doing nought at all they can help doing, and doing everything wrong they have to put their hands to. However, we must do right, whatever happens, and may we prosper!”

“I think, Mistress Mettelane, that we cannot be wrong in a work of charity and human kindness.”

“True, Captain. Charity is a great thing, but there is a deal to be said for the little household graces that

never go to church and market, but just stay at home and make a quiet joyful life possible. Dear me! we should be on the move now. Come, Olivia! We must take time while time is, for time will away."

"I think we shall have a good journey."

"Well, Captain, I think so, too. I always hope for the best, and we never know where a blessing may light. Jeffrey threw his staff this morning when he brought the coach to the door, and it fell the way we are to take, — Appleby way, — and that is a good sign for any journey."

They were making their last preparations as Hannah Mettelane talked. With her pleasant garrulousness she was trying to put aside that sense of leave-taking which, under the circumstances, could not be void of many fears and anxieties; and Olivia perceived and seconded her kind intention as well as she was able. As she stood tying her hood and cloak, she said, —

"John Duttred called last night, Nathaniel, and said many kind things."

"And some that were n't as kind as might have been. But I let him feel that ministers have n't a monopoly of sharp talk, for when he began about the Good Samaritan, I said, 'If I was a minister, John Duttred, I would let that parable lie quiet. It sets ministers in a bad light, — it does that!'" And Hannah laughed good-naturedly, and with the laugh put her first foot into the coach.

While the two ladies, accompanied by Nathaniel, travelled the hot, dusty highway which led to Appleby, Luke Tyson was going at a comfortable speed toward Chenage Grange. The Baron had given him no special orders to hurry, and Luke was naturally of a grave and deliberate temper. He stayed at various farmhouses

for a drink of milk ; and he had two long religious discussions, — one with a Quaker laying a stone wall, and the other with a dreamy Fifth Monarchy fanatic, who was singing “Jerusalem the Golden” as he rode slowly through the ferns and heather of Chenage Moor.

It was about seven in the evening when he reached the Grange. The doors were open, and the sun still above the horizon ; but nevertheless the house had a lonely, inhospitable look, and he had to wait several minutes before any servant appeared to inquire his errand. They were all at meat, and pleasantly employed in masticating their mutton and discussing the attitude of their master and mistress to each other, as reported by the old steward, Gilbert.

“She be a Tartar, she be that ! I wonder Master bides her airs and her tempers as well as he do.”

“Master allays speaks middling sharp like to her. He speaks so all day long and every day. As for her temper, it’s past all ; and I don’t wonder it breeds temper. Master never was a peaceable sort of a fellow. There is somebody halloing, and has been for five minutes. One never can get time to eat a bit of meat and have a comfortable talk without being put about one way or another. Thomas Hodges, go and see whatever that fool is halloing for.”

Thomas was detained at least ten minutes, and curiosity was greatly excited. When he returned to the kitchen, there were plenty of questions for him to answer.

“Why, Thomas, whatever has been the matter?”

“A letter for Mistress’s own hand.”

“Who brought it?”

“One of the men from Kelderby.”

“’T would be from the young captain, I’ll warrant.

He was her servant for long years, and sick with love for her. Stephen of Tiptoe, De Burg's old shepherd, told me that much."

"What did Master say? Out with it, Thomas."

"He said nothing. But, lass-a-day! I would n't be Mistress Chenage when he comes to his tongue."

"Had n't you better ask Kelder's man in to a bite? He 'll maybe know what message he brought."

"He is gone. Master bid me send him off, or loose the dogs on him. He went pretty quickly. I say it is hard on us. If ever a caller comes to our gates, it is 'Be off! or the dogs will know the reason why.'"

"I 'd like to hear what 's going on."

"How was Master?"

"A good bit foxed. He had drunk a bottle."

In fact Chenage was so far "foxed" that for a moment or two he did not realize the full importance of Thomas's message. But Anastasia did. Before her husband could collect his sottish senses, she had taken the letter and left the room. Then Chenage could but make inquiries, and give the brutal and inhospitable order which hurried Luke Tyson beyond his boundaries. The door shut, he stood hesitating whether to finish his wine, or to follow his wife and take the letter from her.

Really he was beyond hesitation; he had got to a point where he was the slave of the bottle, and he sat down and drew it closer to him. "She has read every cursed word in it by this time," he muttered; "and I will make her give it to me when I am ready for it. I 'll wager a crown it was from Nat Kelder. I 'll say it was, and swear it too. Oh, oh, Mistress! wait till I am ready to read the letter to you. 'T will be a pretty pas-time!" And he refilled his glass, and drank to the anticipation.

In the mean time Anastasia, having possessed herself of the letter, ran rapidly with it to her room. She bolted the door, and then stood listening with the white paper pressed tightly against her breast. She had the air of a woman prepared to defend it to the last extremity and then destroy it. But as the moments flew by, and there were no blundering, heavy footsteps upon the stairs or corridor, the hunted look died out of her eyes. She sank into a chair, pale and trembling. Her heart beat wildly with hope, and then sickened with the fear of disappointment. She sat gazing at the seal, desiring yet fearing the revelation which would follow the breaking of it.

“If it should be from John!” The writing was not John’s writing, and the messenger was not John’s messenger; but “if it should be!” She flushed scarlet with the hopes such a thought bred in her.

The few weeks of married life had made a great change. Fear lurked in the bright darkness of her eyes, and her once gay, thoughtless face had become hard and watchful. Her sunny stream of song was frozen. Her lips had grown unfamiliar with smiles, and she habitually, often very provokingly, took refuge in a stubborn silence. Even her dress had the pathos of apathetic beauty. She delighted in jewels, yet in her present case disdained to wear them. Her brocades and ribbons and laces were out of tone with her mood and surroundings; she could no more adorn herself in them than she could touch the lute or sing her old, merry ballads.

This night her dress was of white flax cloth, falling away from her throat and elbows in cascades of lace; and some remnant of inextinguishable vanity had made her put clove carnations in her bosom. But the gown

was crumpled, and it was not as becoming to her as the vivid colours she had been accustomed to wear. She was a tropical bird in the plumage of a sparrow.

With the letter in her hand, and her dark curling hair falling over her white throat and her white garment, she sat still for a few moments, and then suddenly, with a swift movement, broke the seal and spread the open paper before her. It contained so few lines that its address, "To Mistress Chenage," and its superscription of "Odinel Kelder," met her eyes at the same moment.

TO MISTRESS CHENAGE, — Your father, my cousin, Stephen de Burg, is very ill. I thought you might like to go to him at once. My son Nathaniel left for Appleby this morning. He will care for him in the mean time.

With respect and well-wishing, your servant,

ODINEL KELDER.

That was the burden of it, and oh, how heavy a burden! Anastasia loved her father with her whole heart. She felt as if the wings of a dove would be too slow to carry her to his sick-bed. "My father! my father!" she murmured as she walked restlessly, miserably, about the room, uncertainly planning, because doubtful of all realization of her plans. Her head ached and throbbed; she was soon conquered by sheer physical suffering. It would be impossible to discuss the circumstance with Chenage until the morning, and she resolved to seek in sleep oblivion from her pain and sorrow.

Mechanically, from mere force of habit, she went to her mirror, and began to remove her dress before it. She looked with a sad pity at her wan face, and then in a moment her whole expression changed. She had bared her arm and neck, and on the white flesh there

were bruises from a brutal hand. She looked steadily at them; she counted every mark; she touched the wounded flesh with a tender hand; and before she was aware, tears — a slow, heavy rain of tears — fell in pity for her hard fate. When we weep for ourselves, we find either self-evolved consolation, or else the idea of retribution grows with magical swiftness under that bitter rain. Retribution! it was the one idea which Anastasia nourished. Everything was made to feed it. She kept a strict account against Roger Chenage. Scorn, insult, cruelty, wrong, — every manifestation of them was clear in her memory. One event was to balance all, — one event for which she eagerly longed and watched. “When John comes!” — these three words were her solace for every indignity.

And John was coming quickly; of that she was unquestionably, indisputably convinced. The whistle of the winds in his sails, the rattle of the cordage, the hoarse cries of the sailors, — she heard them as she lay dreaming by day and night; and though generally the prophesying cards lay with “delay” and “disappointment,” she trusted to the divination of her heart.

So, whether it was the hand or the tongue that struck her, she possessed her soul in such a strange silence as would have rendered any man less stupid than Chenage watchful and suspicious. He made her delicate flesh wince with shameful pain and her hot blood boil with passion; but she pacified the raging soul within her by a whisper pregnant with vengeful retribution, — “*When John comes!*”

XIV.

JOHN RECKONS WITH CHENAGE.

“In the night time visited,
And seeing with close-shut eyes the day unborn.”

“For she a woman, womanlike in mind,
Not of man’s strength, alone, without a sword,
She hath destroyed me.”

“This shall be thy lot,
My stern Avenger dwelling with thee still.”

“What waters of the Don will cleanse me? Or what sea of Asoph with its barbarous waters bending over the Black Sea? Not Neptune himself, with his multitudinous waters, will be able to expiate such wickedness.”

ANASTASIA had that night a singular experience. A few times in her life she had heard her father speak of a peculiar dream which at critical epochs in their fortunes visited all of the De Burg family. It varied as to its circumstances, but never as to its controlling demon, and she had heard this spirit of the dream so vividly and so recently described that she was conscious of a kind of recognition when she saw him.

For, the week before her miserable wedding, her father met this spirit of his house in that dim frontier of Eternity which we call Dreamland; and so terrible had been the meeting, that in the cold, gray glimmer which precedes dawning he came to her for company, showing a face as wan as a spectre. And as he flung open the casement and thrust his dark head into the still mysterious day, she had shivered with an unknown

fear, — sympathetic, half divining, yet dumb either for question or for comfort.

She recalled his imperative knock at her door, his eager request to be admitted, his greed for light and air, the troubled terror in his eyes, the pallor of the unborn day upon the pallor of his face, the long, sad sigh with which he threw himself into the chair, the unnatural voice in which he whispered her name.

He had said nothing more at the time, but, lost in thought, seemed to be content to feel his daughter's presence, to hear her commonplace observations, and to watch her combing and brushing her long black hair before the mirror. There was something so very mortal and fleshly about Anastasia that he got rid of the supernatural as he watched and listened to her ; so that, when the sun touched the horizon, he felt able to fling off the dread and awe which had overwhelmed him.

She did not name the circumstance at breakfast, but when the meal was over De Burg took her to the terrace, where there was a great sun-dial with a stone seat around it, and he made her sit by his side. In the broad dayshine it was possible to speak of what she ought perhaps to hear.

“You will see him for yourself some day, Asia. He will come as your friend or your foe. He will make you taste the savour of death in life, or else convey by secretest means the assurance of whatever you desire. Ah, me ! the fear of him comes thundering back, and I am tormented with cruel expectation.”

“Who is he?”

“My father believed him to be Glaive de Burg, who burned the Saxons out of Shoreham and built there a castle whose walls still stand. 'T is said he was partner in all King John's treachery to his brother Richard, and

that Glaive de Burg betrayed both brothers to each other. One day he was arrested for high treason, and he knew his hour had come. As he crossed the courtyard of the castle, the mailed guards being on each side of him, he flung the great key of his home backward, and bid his demon 'keep it well until he came again.' He was beheaded within a week, and came no more to Shoreham. But the castle was strangely troubled, and the De Burgs dwelt hardly there until King Henry VIII. gave them this priory. Then they deserted Shoreham, and it fell into decay. But the man with the key grows no older. As my fathers saw him I see him. This morning he presaged great trouble to me. Lowering and black was his face, and his voice full of terror; and I fear death, Asia, knowing well what powers there be behind it."

"But he is not always terrible, and I will hope that he may be so far touched by my fidelity to the De Burgs, and by my helplessness against such as would hurt me, as to fight my battles. And surely, if I see him, Father, I will not fear to ask that all evil designed you may be shifted to your enemies."

And yet when the mysterious adherent did visit her she was conscious only of an intensely personal instruction which she could not translate into human language, — so personal, indeed, that she was inclined jealously to keep to herself all that she had supernaturally learned.

From this informed sleep she awakened with a sudden sense of life. It was as if the demon had said: "That is all. Go!" She opened her eyes wide, there was a moment of blank, then the whole communication flashed upon her mind, and brought with it a feeling of strength and light-heartedness which not even her father's critical condition could essentially impair. For if Nathaniel

Keizer had gone to Appleby she knew he would do all that was possible for the sick man. "Pious people are a comfort sometimes," she thought, "and Cousin Nat's conscience will require him to be extra kind to his enemy."

She dressed herself with some care, and ate her breakfast alone with a very good appetite, Chenage being still in the torpor of alcoholic sleep. Then, as the morning was warm and fine and the west wind brought on it delicious odours from the lavender beds in the lower part of the garden, she asked for scissors and a basket.

"The heads are full ripe, Gilbert," she said; "I will go and cut them. When the master is ready for breakfast let me know."

Gilbert watched her a moment going through the garden, and an unusual feeling of pity came into his heart. "She be pretty and good-natured, bless her,—and my word but she will catch it anon." Then he went into the kitchen to eat his own meal, and found such sentiments little approved. The women all stood by Master, and the inferior men-servants all had personal reasons for standing by the women.

But Anastasia was not thinking of their ill-will, though she was quite aware of it. That wondrous man of the dream, and the mystery and promise of his unexplainable revelation filled her mind with a vague but positive sense of coming triumph over all her enemies. She went straight to the lavender beds and cut the small basket full. As she straightened herself, her eyes met two other eyes. They were looking at her with such an intensity of regard as may have compelled her attention. Before she could move or speak a hand parted the hazel-boughs, a brown hand covered with rings, and then Anastasia laughed lowly and went toward the beckoning fingers.

“Oh, Pastro ! is it you at last?”

“It is Pastro, my lady. The Captain wants your orders.”

“Go and tell him that I am being slowly killed. Chenage flogs me like a dog.”

“The great devil !”

“To-day Chenage goes to Kendal market. Tell Captain John to come, ‘as from the king,’ about one o’clock. I will see him, if I die for it. Pastro, look here !” and she pushed aside her handkerchief and showed a livid mark across her shoulders. “He did that yesterday. Go and tell Captain John what you have seen, what I say.”

“I will tell, fear not.”

“Remember, one o’clock ! Pray God he kill me not before help comes ! Help will come ?”

He nodded decisively, and the mist of pity in his black, piercing eyes told her that she had a proper messenger. She waited a moment until the rustling among the hazel-bushes ceased, then with her basket of lavender she turned toward the house. In a few moments she saw Gilbert at the open door looking toward her. Chenage, then, was at breakfast ; and she hastened, lest her delay should add to his usual irritation.

She was so nervous that she began to sing, — a pitiful little murmur, the thinnest echo of her former clear, high trilling ; that kind of singing in which trembling souls hide, or try to hide, their crying. Chenage looked at her, and the poor pretence froze upon her lips. However, she noticed instantly that he wore the suit in which he usually rode to Kendal, and the circumstance gave her comfort. It was the sign and promise of all she wished. Chenage had dressed himself for his evil destiny.

"Well, Mistress, gadding about, as usual."

"I have been cutting the lavender."

"Gilbert, fling that high-smelling stuff away!"

She let the man take the basket without a word, there was a look in her eyes which maddened Chenage beyond words.

"Where is the letter you got last night?"

She laid it at his side.

"Old Kelder! Lies! Where is Nat Kelder's letter?"

"I had no letter from Nat Kelder."

"You had."

"I had not. You see my father is dying. I want to go to him."

"You want to go to Nat Kelder. He is in Appleby. You shall not go within a hundred miles of him."

"What do I care for Nat Kelder? It is my father I—"

"Ah, me! I would I had a Puritan lover! How I should adore one! How becoming is their dress! How refined and gentle their manners! Loving is their only vice, and I vow they love to perfection! Ah, me! I would I had a Puritan lover!" So, with black, drawn brows and angry mimicry, he mocked her with the idle words she had taught him.

"I want to go to my dying father."

"You want to go to Nat Kelder. You are not going to Appleby now; no, nor at any other time."

"Are you above the law? I have been summoned there; and I swear I will go to my father."

"You will go to bed and stay there. When I am in Kendal I shall tell Dr. Kirby to be here to-morrow. Kirby will swear you are ill, or mad, if I tell him to. And, by Heaven! I will make you mad if you are any saner than suits my purpose."

As he spoke he grasped her arm. And he had a cruel grip; a vise of iron would hardly have pressed her flesh more torturingly.

“Let me go, Roger, please. You hurt me, you make me sick. Pity — pity — pity!”

To see the colour leave her cheeks and mortal terror leap into her eyes, to see her red lips turn ashy and her eyelids droop and quiver, gave him a fierce joy. The brutal fingers closed tighter: he was mocking her about Nat Kelder, and forgot himself until he suddenly knew that he held a dead weight in that merciless grip. For a moment he was terrified. He called the women, and they loosed her dress and threw cold water over her face; but with the return of life he experienced an excess of anger against her. She began to sob as consciousness came back, and he sent every one away and sat down beside her.

“Mistress,” he said, “it will be more for your welfare to listen to me than to cry for yourself. I am going to Kendal. Ask Audrey to show you the room in the garret of which she keeps the key. It has a story, and she may tell it to you. My grandmother, Lady Cecilia Chenage, lived eleven years in that room. There is an iron staple in the wall, and an iron chain and bracelet on the floor. My grandfather kept the key of that bracelet. Lady Chenage was subject to faintings and cryings; she had had many servants as well as my grandfather, and she made his life uncomfortable. She became mad. Do you understand? Faith, if you do not, you have less sense than will serve your turn.”

Then he went away, leaving the terror-stricken woman dumb with the horror of her situation. She lay still until she heard the clatter of his horse on the paved yard, and

knew by the whining of the dogs and the clash of the iron gates that he was on the high road to Kendal.

It was then about ten o'clock, and if John came there were still three hours to be got over. If they should carry her to that dreadful room before John came! If John should not come! She tried to think what she must do, and the outlook appalled her. Her father was in prison, perhaps dying; he could not help her. The Bellinghams had cast her off since that affair of Roger Prideaux. Mistress Cecil, the Le Talls, the Sandersons, the Paleys, none of them had the power, even if they had the will, to help her. The Kelders? Yes, she believed the Baron would shield her at any risk. But how could she reach him? The servants watched the house by day, the dogs would not spare her by night. It was impossible for her to walk to Kelderby; under what pretence could she get a carriage, or even a horse, to take her there?

In a hopeless and miserable round of revengeful cares and sullen sorrows she passed a couple of hours. Several times Audrey urged her to "go and lie down and get a bit of sleep." But she felt as if nothing could induce her to go upstairs again, unless John's coming should remove the hand of terror. Soon after the noon hour she heard the gallop of a horse and the slow movement of a man leaving his dinner to answer the unexpected visitor.

She stood breathless, with the door ajar, listening. It was an hour sooner than she expected her brother, but she could understand how hard it would be for John to wait after he received the message sent by Pastro. The imperative knock at the front door was repeated twice before Thomas Hodges reached it. It was a moment of supreme anxiety. She hardly breathed until she heard the voice, John's voice, ask for Chenage. There

was the slow, expected reply, then some impetuous talking, and Hodges followed by John came into the parlour. He was perfectly disguised in a suit of almost Puritanical gravity.

The eyes of the brother and sister met. "Madam," said John, "here is the king's seal and authority for my intrusion. As I cannot see your husband, permit me to sit at this table and write my instructions." He spread out a sheet of parchment with a great seal and the signature of "Carolus Rex" attached to it. Anastasia played her part perfectly. She called in Gilbert and bid him look at the paper, and Gilbert bowed down to the sign and seal of royalty. In a whispered consultation with Anastasia he thought that the bearer of so august a paper should have all conveniences, and he himself proposed to spread refreshments for him in the best dining-parlour.

"I shall have to ask you, Madam, to give me your attention, as these instructions are in cipher, and must be explained to you."

With affected reluctance Anastasia remained, and at length the door was shut and she stood alone with her avenger. They wasted no time. She told her story in low, passionate words; she showed her wounds and her bruises; she revealed the threat made to her that morning, and as she spoke her eyes were full of such mortal terror that John saw in them the bare garret room with its iron chain and bracelet.

He listened with that quiet fury which intends nothing less than the direst vengeance. His pretty sister who had braved so much for him! What would he not do for her? As she made her mournful complaint his face grew blacker and blacker, and Anastasia knew that Master Chenage would go mad before she did.

“What time does Chenage leave Kendal?”

“Between ten and eleven to-night.”

“Will he have any one with him?”

“He may have Squire Bevil, but only for two miles. Bevil Hall is about two miles out of Kendal.”

“Will the brute be sober?”

“So sober as to keep his seat. His horse knows its master and the way home.”

“He will never bring his master home again.”

“Are you going to kill him?”

“Kill him? Not yet. Oh, no! He shall long for death a thousand times more than he ever longed for you. Kill him? Not until he has paid for every blow he has given you. Oh, I will kill him by inches as he would have killed you in that living grave upstairs. He shall die daily, — by hours and minutes.”

“I have not told you all yet. He promised Father £200 to go to the king, and then he informed against him. 'Twas his hope that father would be arrested before the money was paid.”

“Oh-h-h! That accounts for what I saw at De Burg as I passed. Where is Father?”

“In Appleby common jail.”

He drew his lips tight, and an indefinable sound escaped them. It was the utterance of many feelings, but anger was the predominating one.

“I can never believe that you will forget this, John.”

“You must needs know better. I shall think on it, — and he will pay for it. Ha, ha! ha, ha!” Anastasia looking into John's face caught something of the passions which infused and infuriated it. Her glinting eyes had the fire of vengeance in them. Her lips wore the cruel smile of inexorable and pitiless retaliation.

“Shall I see you again, John?”

“Not at this time. I shall be pleasantly engaged with Master Roger Chenage. But Pastro will bring you a comfortable word. Get ready for Appleby if you wish to go, and trouble your heart no more about a dead man.”

“Chenage is — ”

“Chenage *was*, as far as you are concerned.”

“John, I had *the dream* last night.”

“Ah! that is doing business. Was he favourable?”

“He touched my wedding-ring, and it fell at my feet broken in two. He made my heart light as a bird on the topmost branch. I have assurances.. If I could find words I might tell you more.”

“You have said enough. I am invincible. My own sister, my only true friend, there are footsteps!”

He stood up, kissed her with hearty affection, and then faced the door with a haughty insolence that made Gilbert cringe and tremble before him.

“There is food and wine in the next room, if it please your lordship — your grace — your highness — to eat and drink.”

“Bring me wax and a candle.”

There were candles and wax in the room, and Anastasia watched with many queer thoughts the old man's trembling desire to serve. John sealed elaborately a sheet of paper, and gave it to Anastasia with many exact orders for its safe delivery to Chenage. “Keep it in your breast, Madam,” he said; “things of great importance to the king and to the future Earl of Chenage are secured by it.”

Anastasia bowed low, but even in that moment, when her existence was held in suspense and tragical danger, she could not avoid giving her brother a glance from beneath her level brows which might have roused a fatal

suspicion even in Gilbert's stupid mind if he had not been so lavishly impressed by John's moods and actions that he dared not raise his eyes. And he was further impressed by the fact that John refused all refreshment, his care being only to get forward on his journey as quickly as possible.

"Mistress! Mistress!" — and Gilbert sank his voice to a whisper, — "'t is the king himself, I'll warrant. He be here looking after his own business, — and need for him to do so; and a grander man I never saw. I could fairly have knelt down and kissed his feet."

Anastasia gladly humoured the idea. She went for a likeness of the exiled monarch, and Gilbert was certain of the identity of the two men. What an event it was for Chenage! The fact that the whole household was enjoined to secrecy gave the news something of the delightful flavour of stolen fruit. In the kitchen there was a grand feast prepared, and over it the stranger was discussed.

Even "the mistress" obtained a reflected respect. She was the keeper of a paper which was to make master Earl of Chenage. Gilbert had heard him say so, and every man-servant and woman-servant had their own hopes in the realization of such dignity. These hopes kept them in delightful conversation and in a constant appetite for something to eat or drink until the night was far advanced.

Anastasia understood the revolution in feeling, and she smiled complacently. She was no longer in mortal terror. She felt that John had succeeded in imparting to her an importance which would secure her safety until he had made her again mistress of her destiny. But she took the precaution to show herself to some one of the household every hour of the day. If there was any sus-

picion, she was determined to be beyond it. At eleven o'clock she consulted Gilbert about his master's return. She did not "wish to sleep until she was clear of the charge of the paper." Gilbert thought she ought not to do so. He was sure master would be home anon. Thus another hour passed, — two, three hours, — and the whole household being exhausted with their great expectations, it was finally concluded that Master had stayed the night with Squire Bevil.

"Or he may have met the stranger," said Anastasia, with an air of mystery and subdued enjoyment.

This suggestion was so excellent that it supplied a new interest to the exhausted theme. The servants resolved to sit another hour, and Anastasia bid them good-night with her sweetest smile. "I think," she said, "we have heard good news to-day, — good news both for England and Chenage." The men gave a little cheer. The women dropped courtesies. They looked at her with a far more gracious interest than they had given that night on which she entered Chenage as a bride. They inferred from her parting speech that the king was coming back, and also that she had some surety of becoming Countess Chenage. And they were all shrewd enough to know that the king's return would restore De Burg to his estate, and thus give to the future countess a position and a protector which even Chenage would not dare assail.

All their thoughts and selfish plans were clear to Anastasia, and as soon as she was within her room she laughed softly but immoderately at them. She had not been mentally idle, for she was aware that her position was not yet in her own control. She desired most of all things to go to her father, but this step she could not take while her husband's fate was uncertain. She must remain at Chenage until public opinion had come to some

decision on the matter. But she felt already the lifting of the incubus. Her flagging spirit, that ever since her marriage had flown under its natural pitch, as if it was a body in a body and not a mounting essence, resumed its old daring, its pushing inquisitiveness concerning whatever affected its happiness.

As soon as she was alone she threw aside every restraint of mood and clothing. She was too excited to sleep; her mind was busy with probabilities, and she looked in vain for anything fixed to rest it upon. Underlying all her thoughts was the thought of her father. All that he had suffered, all that he was suffering, she laid to the charge of Chenage. He had denied this treachery, — denied upon his honour, — but Anastasia believed him not; and the contemplation of her dying father made her contemplate the probable condition of Chenage with satisfaction.

She recalled one by one his various acts of petty tyranny; she looked again at the marks which his cruel fingers had left; she shuddered at the threat which led her memory to that chamber of wrong and misery which might have become her grave. The thought of the poor lady who perished there filled her eyes with tears. The thought of Audrey, who had probably assisted at that burial of the living, filled her with horror and with strange dreams of retribution.

She heard the clock strike three, and she stood up to listen to each reverberation. John had told her that at three o'clock the tide would serve his purpose, and Roger Chenage would begin in reality his voyage to eternity. John's last words to her had been, "At three o'clock he will be dead to you." Three had struck. She was free. She took a long breath; she stretched outward and upward her arms. She felt no motion of pity. She asked

herself why she should pity him. "He never knew pity for any one, not even for the poor lady who could hardly have wronged him in any way.

"Whatever John does to him, he deserves it; I swear he does. I hope John will tell him that I planned the whole affair. I do not think that he will sleep much to-night; and on whom will he spend his temper to-morrow morning? Not on me. Will he try it on John? Ha, ha! his courage flies not so high. A weak woman, whom the law had tied hands and feet ready for him, makes the pastime he prefers. I wonder if by this time John has cut my bonds. I think he has; I believe it. I am free — free — free — free!" She dropped suddenly asleep with the word parting her lips.

She was awakened by a loud and imperative knock at her chamber door, and the sound of a human voice full of wonder and fear. "Mistress, Mistress! open, an it please you, Mistress; such a thing has happened! We don't know what to make of such a thing."

"What is the matter, Nan?"

"We don't know what, Mistress. The master's horse is come home alone. Master is n't on him. A thing like that never happened before. It has given us all such a feel, you can't think, Mistress."

In her white night garment and her bare feet she stood looking at the woman. Her long black hair fell around her face and shoulders, and she lifted her hands and pushed the froward curls behind her ears. In the respite this action gave her, she tried to decide upon the proper *rôle* to play.

"Mercy on us, Nan! Send Gilbert to me at once!"

Unconsciously she spoke in her old imperative manner; and the woman resented its assumption, even in the midst of her excitement.

“Gilbert, you are to go to the mistress, and to go to her at once. She is in a very high way this morning. I don't know what to make of her. I walked myself off middling quick.”

After such a message Gilbert thought his honour demanded an extra delay; and before he had made up his mind to go to Anastasia, she had hurriedly dressed herself and was with him. Suddenly she opened the great oak door which shut off the kitchen, and stood gazing at its occupants from the topmost of the short flight of steps by which it was reached. The gloom and shadow of the long passage was behind her; the morning light from the wide kitchen windows shone in her face, and turned the Indian calico she wore into a garment of strange beauty and brilliancy; for its “pines” full of gorgeous colouring caught the August sunshine, and made around her a haze of glowing reflections.

“Gilbert!”

Gilbert turned and looked at his mistress, and in that first glance abandoned all his dreams of authority over her. Anastasia had regained herself. Her beauty was a thing to wonder at. Not a servant of them had ever before seen her face as they saw it then, with the eyes flashing fire and the cheeks blazing like carnations, and the long curling veil of her dark hair flung backward in that studied confusion which permitted some of the locks to stray over the milky whiteness of her throat and bosom.

“Gilbert! what have you done? Who has been sent to Kendal?”

“I have been that moidered, Mistress, I have had no thoughts about me. I would give a matter of twenty shillings to know what to do.”

“This is your affection for your master, is it? A

pretty crowd of sniffing, sneaking varlets he has been feeding and pampering ! Every man-jack of you ought to have been on the search ere this. Come, sir, take horse and go to Baron Le Tall's, and raise the cry there. Thomas, you make haste to Squire Bevil's. Jekyl, you ride post-haste to Kendal, rouse the constables and the justices, and see to their getting out a hue and cry. The master had gold on him ; I tell you he had gold on him, and plenty of it. All of you knew that. Pray God all of you know not more than you ought to know about this delay and the reason of it. I am suspicious of you ; before God, I am suspicious of you all ! A bad lot the master pampered ; I always told him so. Guzzling and planning, instead of calling me and hurrying on the search yourselves. You have let hours go by without one word or effort. It looks evil ; it looks scandalously evil ! ”

“ Mistress, these are strange words.”

“ True words, Audrey ; only too true ! If you are indeed innocent, make shift to reach Farmer Gates, and what you cannot do he can. Jess, you foot it over the moor to the head-shepherd. Nan, you take the high-road, and turn hither the first man, you see, gentle or simple.”

“ Mistress, I am little able to ride.”

“ Make shift to do so, Gilbert. You will ride, perhaps, to the saving of your own life ; for I swear by my conscience I trust none of you ! Too much delay ! Such a good master ! Such an idle pack of ingrates around him ! ”

Her passion was so well assumed that it carried all resistance before it. The younger servants, white and terrified, hastened to do her bidding. Audrey and Gilbert had not the moral courage to keep their own ground.

In fifteen minutes she had the house to herself, and then she hastily sought the spot where Pastro had met her on the previous day. There it was most likely he would be waiting for her again. Her supposition was correct. When she reached the lavender beds, the brown hand parted the hazel-boughs, and the large brown face with its gold-ringed ears gleamed for a moment amid the green leaves.

“Pastro?”

“Here, my Lady.”

“What news?”

“All is well done.”

“You got him?”

“Safe.”

“Where is he?”

“The Devil or Captain John knows. He is between them and the deep sea.”

“Where did you get him?”

“Two miles out of Kendal.”

“At what hour?”

“At eleven last night. He was in drink.”

“How was it done?”

“We were three. One stopped his horse. One felled him. Captain John gagged him. I had borrowed after dark the horse and cart of a fisher who was out with his lines. We laid the brute at the bottom of it. I and my mate went with the cart. Captain John rode the horse of Chenage to the sea-shore. We reached it about one o'clock. All was quiet. Our boat was waiting. We tossed him into it, struggling like a caught conger, and just as dumb. I saw him put on board.”

“Then?”

“I took back the horse and cart. The fisher's wife heard me. I told her a bit of smuggling had been done,

and gave her a gold piece. She nodded very sensibly. Then I rode the horse nearly back to Chenage, and turned him loose. He did his part well also. I have waited here for you."

"Pastro, Pastro! how can I thank you?"

"For Captain John I would cut off my hands. To help a fair-lady out of trouble is thanks by itself. I am paid."

"You are a fine gentleman; I swear there are few as fine! Where go you now?"

"To the sea-shore. The farmers stare at me. By the sea I am with my kind. For three days the Captain will keep in deep water; on the last night I shall meet him by Barrow and get aboard again."

"Then you will see Chenage?"

"Yes;" and he nodded with the syllable most expressively.

"Will you have wine or meat? I have time to bring them."

"They will be a great gift to me."

So she hasted back to the house, and took from the buffet a bottle of wine and some meat and bread. As she passed through the hall she stood a moment, and lifted a riding-whip which lay upon a table with Chenage's hunting-cap and gaiters. A bright but vindictive smile widened her mouth as she did so; and after she had given Pastro his food she said, —

"When you see Roger Chenage, give him this whip, and tell him 'to take patience' with it. That was commonly his word when he used it on me, — 'Take patience, Mistress.' Deliver as much to him, and say with it that I think of him hourly, and find in the thought a very reasonable happiness."

Then Pastro wrapped the long lash round the leathern

handle, laughing low as he did so ; for he was thinking within himself what a delightful, devilish thing it would be in Captain John's hand.

She stopped on her return to the house and gathered a handful of lavender. She put her face in its hot perfume, and then fastened the purple heads in her girdle. She did not hurry, and she found plenty of time to eat a refreshing breakfast before there was any answer to the many calls for help she had sent out.

Le Tall came first. She did not think it necessary to affect any great show of grief to him. He knew that Chenage treated his wife brutally ; he knew it, though Anastasia never said so. As a friend of both De Burg and Chenage, he assumed the duty of directing the search for the missing squire. As a magistrate, he made the servants miserable ; for he evidently regarded Anastasia's suspicions of them as not altogether improbable. They durst not leave their service, and it was now Anastasia's pleasure to render it a very hard one.

Revenge made her a most economical housekeeper. Comfortable meals and confidential chats might have done much to help their anxiety ; but she kept them on bare rations and at constant and divided service. "Every piece of money was needed for the search ;" and whenever she found two of them together, she accused them of making plots to hide their crime, and hinted at the necessity of securing them behind bolts and bars.

For many days Chenage Grange was busy with comers and goers. Two generations had not seen the old gray house so apparently gay. Constables, magistrates, friends, and curious people of all kinds found business there. Every one was received by Anastasia. She listened to

their suggestions. She wept where she knew weeping would be effective. She smiled radiantly through her tears where it was best to dazzle. She let no one go away without eating or drinking. She earned the goodwill or the admiration of all who approached her.

Of course the strange visitor of the previous day became the prime subject for suspicion and inquiry. The paper given to Anastasia was solemnly opened in the presence of two magistrates — and found blank. At that day this was not a remarkable circumstance. The king had probably an understanding with Chenage as to what a blank message would mean. Or, what was more likely, the paper might contain information which could only be made visible by the use of some secret preparation.

Gilbert described the man according to his own wonderful opinions and suspicions. Anastasia, in clever but guarded speech, contrived to represent a person as utterly dissimilar to John de Burg as it was possible to be. And when nothing could be learned of Chenage, and every trace of the man beyond Bevil gates vanished, popular opinion settled itself upon the surmise that Chenage had met this stranger, that he was really the king or some one very close to the king, and that Chenage had considered it best for his Majesty's interests, or his own interests, to go away, secretly and at once, upon some important political errand.

“He will return as unexpectedly and suddenly as he went away,” said the greater part of the friends of Roger Chenage. Le Tall did not echo this opinion. He had heard from Anastasia during these days the full story of her sufferings and her husband's wickedness, and Le Tall was a superstitious man.

“The Devil has taken him,” he said with a gloomy

terror. "He has gone down into hell while he was yet quick."

And Anastasia answered him not a word. But there was such a strange intelligence in her gleaming eyes, in her parted lips, in her white fingers upon them, that he mentally added, "And you know it!"

XV.

IN APPLEBY JAIL.

“But if one righteously hath borne the rod
The angels kiss those lips which spake for God.”

“Send thy silver on before, tending to his sick and poor.
Every dirhem dropped in alms touches Allah’s open palms
Ere it fall into the hands of thy brother. Allah stands
Begging of thee when thy brother asketh help.”

“Men are more sensitive to contemptuous language than unjust acts ;
for it is harder to bear insult than wrong.”

THE little party of relief from Sandys had left home in the sunshine, but it was raining heavily when they entered Appleby, — that warm, misty summer rain which seems so unreasonable and is so depressing. It was too late to visit the jail that night, and they were all weary enough to be grateful for the rest and refreshment of the comfortable hostelry near it.

In the morning it was still raining, and Olivia looked mournfully into the wet street. Not far away she could see a low stone building with iron gratings across its small apertures, and she knew instinctively that it was the jail. Unflinchingly she looked at it, in her serious eyes the vague, sad speculation with which we approach the unknown factors of our destiny. Nathaniel stood silently beside her. They were waiting breakfast, for Hannah Mettelane was trying to get into her hands in orderly fashion the new circumstances out of which she was to make daily life.

“And I’ll tell you what, children,” she said, “if you are set, both of you, on going into that place, it will be a deal better for me to stay out of danger. If we should all be sick together, who is to nurse the sick? Every soldier cannot go to the battlefield; some one must be left in camp.”

Black and miserable in the rainy morning looked the iron-grated jail. And its interior was crushing. For there is always some incubus of horror and sadness in the air of a place where men have suffered for generations, just as in old churches where men have prayed for generations the presence of the supernatural is almost palpable. An interview with the jailer was the first necessity, for in that day this functionary was an autocrat, responsible to none, guided only by his own passions, prejudice, or interest.

He was found to be a very moderate fellow, hiding beneath his Puritanical garb and address a strong liking for the king in exile. Toward De Burg and Prideaux, who were in prison for their presumed sympathy with the king, he had a favourable feeling, and had willingly permitted them such comforts as they were ready to pay for.

“But you see, Master,” said he to Nathaniel, “I do rent this place of the town, and hard work it be to make my rent and living out of such as are sent here — being mostly Quakers, who are a stubborn lot, and though many of them rich, standing on the unlawfulness of their imprisonment, and dying rather than paying their dues.”

He was taking his keys from his leather belt as he spoke, and Olivia and Nathaniel followed him without further remark. The opening of a door introduced them to the upper prison. It was a large room, used

for the women prisoners and for light offenders, and though foul and close beyond words and but dimly lighted by the open grates, still immeasurably more comfortable than the lower one, into which they descended by a trap in the floor and a steep, ladder-like stair.

In this dungeon, which was below the street, there were only three small gratings in front ; the back part of the room remained in perpetual chill and shadow. The common sewer of the town ran through it ; the air was full of noxious gases ; frogs and toads and crawling things had there a constant dwelling-place. It was always cold ; its stone seats were wet and slimy, and into it the blessed sunshine never came ; only a dim light, shorn of all its warmth and glory, crept timidly in for a few yards, and was then quenched in the heavy miasma of the place.

Nathaniel ejaculated in a passionate whisper the great, compassionate name of "God !" Olivia stood still and looked with widening eyes around her. A Friend with placid face near one of the gratings was braiding shoelaces and dreaming of heaven. Another Friend was drawing through the bars a loaf of bread which a sympathizer had brought him. A third sat backward in the gloom. Two men waiting trial for murder were quarrelling over a pot of beer near him, and a highwayman by his side was spitting out curses at the gibbet and chains he foresaw for himself. But the Quaker in the midst of them heard them not. Distrammelled of earth, he had retired into the inmost inmost of the soul, where neither man nor angels but only God cometh. He was in an ecstasy. In that divine depth his soul had recovered her wings, and on the six pinions of contemplation found out that third heaven where there is a dividing

asunder of soul and spirit by the sword of the Lord, and the spirit is joined to the Lord.¹

There were two cell-like rooms cut off from this larger one, and Prideaux and De Burg occupied them. Nathaniel went at once to his cousin. Olivia was speedily in her father's arms. He had not dreamed of her coming; she was like the vision of an angel to him. And he was so worn-out, so near the point of exhaustion, that he covered his face with his hands and wept. But there are few situations so bad that money will not ameliorate them. A kind of stiff-necked carelessness had prevented Prideaux from buying comforts of which he had been unjustly deprived, but Olivia felt no such restraint. The jailer brought, at her order, plenty of fresh straw, and spread it for Roger in a corner of the larger room, and he lay down upon it gratefully and fell into a sleep which every prisoner respected. And Asa put his burning hands in Olivia's with a sweet content.

"It has been my prayer to see thee once more," he whispered. "And thou needst not fear, for no harm shall come to thee, — God's love so walls thee round about."

"What shall I do for thee, Asa?"

"Stand faithful to thy God and bear thy testimony bravely. Let not thy love ever come before thy duty. In due time love will be blessed by duty. Thy father hath changed much. His heart is on fire. He hath a zeal beyond his strength. Leave him not till thou canst leave him wisely. Be a good girl, and God will make thee happy. Thou canst trust him?"

"From the beginning to the end."

All there was left of mortal life seemed to have fled to Asa's eyes. They had an ardent, longing gaze, as if his

: ¹ He that is joined unto the Lord is one spirit. — 1 Cor. vi. 17.

soul was watching through them for the angel bringing his release.

“Be a good girl, and God will make thee happy.” He said the words again, and fell into a sleepy stupor from which he did not rouse himself until sunset. Then he touched Roger and said, —

“I have heard with my inward ear the voice of God. I am come to the day which shall judge all my days. Wash my hands, Roger, and my face, and put on me clean linen, and then I will lie down and wait for my change.” It was the last intelligent act of a noble death-bed. Calmly and steadily through a week of great suffering he had been going down to the grave, with a certain solemn pomp of conscious grandeur, as one who knew himself victorious over it.

So Roger washed and dressed Asa for his burial. He became rapidly worse. Though he had semi-lucid intervals during the next twenty-four hours; though his inner man mounted higher and higher, his outward man hourly wasted, and drew toward its place and centre. During this last remnant of conscious life he spoke but five times, and each effort appeared to be made from a distance farther and farther away from earth: —

“Here I have been very close to Him, but now I escape to the courts of heaven, where I shall see him face to face.”

“Rest in the Lord! Rest! Rest! and again rest!”

“The river is very low and calm; he that is washed needeth only to wash his feet!”

“Light! Light! A tide of glory!”

“Felicia!”

Felicia was his wife's name. She had left earth more than forty years before.

“Felicia!” It was the last effort of mortal speech,

though he lay in a deathlike stupor for more than three days afterward. Why was not his earthly tabernacle dissolved without this pause? For what was he waiting? For whom was he waiting? Neither of *this* nor of *that* world; it was evident that he was so far beyond mortality as to —

“ Feel through all his fleshly dresse
Bright shootes of everlastingnesse.”

Olivia watched him constantly, but at midnight of the fourth day the watch was over; the act of death was accomplished. It was a dark sultry night, with no light of moon or stars. The rain plashed heavily on the pavement outside; the rush candle in the heavy air of the cell burned very dimly. Nathaniel and Olivia knelt together on the damp straw of the dying man's bed; Roger clasped his hands and repeated in a low, intense voice Paul's triumphant defiance of death. The three Friends in prison sat in silent prayer at a little distance. There was a calm beyond the calm of earth, and the faint stir and mutterings of the restless prisoners in the larger room touched not the peace of this place of death. At the last moment a heavenly radiance transfigured the face of the dying man. It was the light of the rising, not of the setting, life. Out of bonds and darkness through the constellations! Was there any wonder that the rapture of that release glorified the moment of death?

The night of Asa's death was the crisis of De Burg's illness. Nathaniel had dared to leave him only for the few sacred moments of the great mystery. Immediately after it De Burg recovered that consciousness he had lost for many days. During that sojourning at the mouth of the grave he had been constantly to his own soul muttering his crimes. But it was a confession without repent-

ance and without promise. He came back to life insolent with that hate and anger whose fever had already burnt him to ashes and left him without power to give it the graphic utterance he had been accustomed to. The sight of Nathaniel almost convulsed him with abortive rage, and it was evident that his presence would no longer be serviceable.

The jailer's wife had given a bed to Olivia, and the weary girl was sleeping. Prideaux sat beside his dead servant lost in a reverie which Nathaniel could not disturb. He awoke one of the Friends in the prison and left De Burg in his charge. Then he went to one of the gratings, and standing by it, waited for the morning. The rain was over, but there was a wrack of clouds driving on the wind; all the stars were muffled, and the little town was so deeply hushed in sleep that the wailing of a sick child a little distance off seemed to fill the street with a portentous and sorrow-laden sound.

An influence he could not escape was around him; and as the dawn came dimly and showed him the white faces turned heavenward in their sleep, he comprehended the divine pity of Christ. And he stood among those prisoners of sorrow and sin with prayers and tears, bringing each separate soul, as he understood it, to the heart of infinite pity. Thus in the night when there are no ordained priests in the temples, God has priests consecrated without imposition of hands. Clouds of darkness were in the sacred aisles and over the altars of every church in England, but still priests ministered before the Lord. The Friend watching by De Burg was praying. Prideaux, sitting by "his servant departed this life in hope," was praising God for him. Nathaniel standing in the prison-house lifted up his hands and with holy intercession ministered before God. Everywhere souls were awake with

sorrow or with pain and were serving, each soul in its course, before the Lord. "For these are they to whom the night-watch is appointed."

As soon as the jailer was awake Nathaniel left the prison. He found at the inn a messenger from Kelderby with letters from the baron and Lady Kelder. The baron informed him that George Sanderson of Penrith wanted to borrow one hundred pieces of gold on mortgage, and he requested Nathaniel to accompany to Penrith the lawyer who had the money in charge and examine the security given, "if it was within his duty to De Burg to leave him for so long." Lady Kelder wrote more explicitly : —

SON NATHANIEL, — My cousin Annie's husband is in trouble through tampering with politics, — a thing no decent man can do and keep out of trouble ; and if your affections are not totally and sheerly given to those Quakers, 't will be a service to me, your mother, if you convey the gold with some words of sympathy and good-will in your own person. 'T is not to be hoped that you will return to Kelderby until after the assize, yet I pray you to remember that you may have some indebtedness to your father and myself. Your father hath a failing sickness, I fear, and I, — but it is little matter on that subject to complain. But I pray you to care a little for your own body's welfare, seeing that the soul is very useless without the body on this earth ; for I do assure you that good health is the soul's good fortune. And though a man so far gone in love may not believe it, good health is the very salt of life. My son, I long to see you, and so abide your loving mother,

JOAN KELDER.

To the duty nearest to us ! Wise and good men have obeyed that dictum long before Carlyle voiced it. To go to Penrith was Nathaniel's most evident duty, and he went. And Olivia was not sorry to be rid for a while of

Love's fearing importunities. She perceived that a great "opportunity" had been given her, and she desired to accept it gladly, without fear and without restraint; but Nathaniel's constant cautions and anxieties clouded her enthusiasm, and really hindered her usefulness. So it is that even in love a part is sometimes better than the whole.

The two weeks that followed were weeks of great though subdued excitement. Roger's heart was in a flame; he forgot everything in the great strait of obligation which he felt toward his fellow-prisoners. He was an evangelist filled with his own evangel. The power and fervour of the Indwelling Light burned within him, and kindled every soul that he approached; for men catch doctrines by actual contact, by heart acting upon heart, not by reasoning and written arguments. And to these men and women in prison, sinking through long, hard pressure of obscure distresses, or buffets of outrageous fortune, or bonds of actual crime, the gospel Roger preached was the Gospel of a great Deliverance; and none of them quite escaped the almost miraculous influence of his burning words.

Olivia's power was equally deep, though less marked. She spent the long hot days among the women prisoners. There were nursing babies with them, and the mother of one was shivering and burning with an ague. What could Olivia do but take the wasted little atom and nurse it in her own arms? She listened to all these poor creatures' sorrows. She taught them several small arts by which they could earn a trifle of money. She brought them the good food which Hannah Mettelane prepared. She gave gold freely where gold could give liberty. She filled the hours of her voluntary confinement with deeds whose loving unselfishness touched even

the rough hearts of the jailer and his wife to a far-off imitation of them.

Nor did she forget De Burg. He had no conscious remembrance of her, and the quiet girl in her duffle gray gown who washed his hands and face in sweet waters, who brought him jellies and broths and the delicate food he longed for, evoked no particular speculation in his mind. He had indeed a double portion of the selfishness of the convalescent, — he was served and comforted, and the fact was for many days sufficient for him.

But one afternoon, when he was so much stronger as to be lifted into a chair near the grating, he did begin to wonder vaguely who the girl might be. In two more days he had progressed so far as to reflect that the men who lifted and dressed him were evidently Quakers, and then it was easy enough to infer that Olivia also was in prison for her faith. He called to mind in a rambling way the number of wealthy and refined women who had been thrown into jails for not going to church, or for talking to small congregations in their own houses, and he speedily decided that his nurse was one in the same case. Then some convincing thought connected her with the Quaker Prideaux, whom he had himself helped into Appleby prison. A strange suspicion followed, and he was about to trace it to confirmation when the door was softly opened and his own daughter stood upon the threshold. She glanced at her father, and instantly comprehending his ability to receive her, fell at his feet with a glad cry. She put her arms around his neck and drew his wasted face down to her own and covered it with tears and kisses.

“Asia! Asia! Why came you not before?”

“’T was the fault of that hound Chenage. But he

will never come between us again, my father. Never again !”

“What mean you? Is he dead?”

“He is gone.”

“Gone? But where?”

She looked him steadily in the eyes. “I know not, and I care not. He treated me like a servant, and he flogged me like a dog.”

“Flogged *you*! He flogged *you*! A thousand hells!” And his parchment-like skin, wrinkled with the waste of sickness, glowed as if there was a flaming fire beneath it.

“He put you here also, and by God’s day! I would I had him here under my own hand and foot.”

“Gone! Gone! Where hath he gone? Speak, Asia!”

“Le Tall saith that the Devil hath him, and faith! I am sure Le Tall has guessed to a miracle.”

“I am too weak to guess your riddle. In plain words, what mean you?”

“The day he disappeared a stranger came to Chenage, and he asked me many things about him. I kept nothing back; I showed him the bruises on my arms and bosom. He made my wrongs his, as he had a right to do. Chenage went to Kendal market that day, and he never came home.”

“Kidnapped?”

“The man said he came on the ‘king’s business,’ and the general report is that Chenage went with him on the same, and will return as unexpectedly as he left.”

“Think you that?”

“When to-morrow comes back again I shall begin to tremble.”

She had grown suddenly gloomy, and De Burg looked uneasily at her. “You must know, dear father, I could

not come here earlier; for there was a blaze about the affair, and for my own safety I sat still where I was, in the sight of all. But when the nearness of your trial gave me excuse, I grudged every moment of delay."

"I have been in the grip of death, Asia."

"Baron Kelder wrote me of your illness, and also of Nat Kelder coming to you. Nat hath a conscience, and I knew he would be good to you for the contradiction of the thing."

"'T was but one of many humiliations. I know well that out of Prideaux's pocket have come many things of prime importance to me, drugs and the like. Also I have been nursed by Prideaux's daughter, or else I have dreamt it. 'T is hard to stomach such favours."

"Faith! 't is very easy, if you look at it in the right way. Let Prideaux pay for your drugs. Let Nathaniel give you comforts and service. Let Saint Olivia mend your laces and linens, and make you soups and jellies. Too much honour for the lot of them! Nothing is more comfortable to me than to reflect on the good things I get out of them that hate me." She spread her velvet skirts, and looked down at the jewelled clasps of her shoes and up at her embroidered gloves, and then removed the beaver hat she wore and shook out its white plumes. And as she did so she said, with a toss of her haughty head, —

"Chenage paid for these braveries, — that is one point in their favour. I can see him hugging his purse and counting out the gold pieces one by one, as if they were drops of his heart's blood. I tread upon him every time I buckle my shoes. I wish I could send him word how gladly I wear the velvets whose cost he counted so grudgingly. Faith! these white plumes in my hat he

bought for his own beaver, and being of the primest quality, I make myself welcome to them. Odsbodkins! What are your enemies for but to serve you? Have you forgotten, Father, that the assize begins in two days, and that even if your trial is put off until the last there is but little time to prepare for it?"

"I have been unable to think of it. You must see a lawyer for me."

"I will do better than that. I will see the two judges; Lord Cecil is one of them, and I have so worked on Mistress Cecil as to get a grace-letter from her to him. As for Lord Sutton, the other, he never yet could resist the 'I pray you' of a pretty woman. I shall make sure of your verdict ere they try your case. Keep your heart at full ease."

The conversation then turned upon Chenage and her married life; and though nothing definite was told De Burg, he had a very clear intelligence as to his son-in-law's fate. In his heart he thought it very good news; and good news is a cordial tinctured with the elixir of life. Before Anastasia left him he was sitting straighter, and holding his head with something of its old domineering poise, as he drank in his daughter's promises and hopes for the future.

She put a full purse into his hand as she went away. "Chenage's gold," she said with a merry laugh. "I hope he remembers how much he saved for you and for me. When the king comes to Whitehall, dear father, faith! we will carry it with the highest there."

She was in a royal humour, and as she passed through the prison rooms she left some of her smiles and gold among their wretched inmates. They talked about her as if she was some creature of different clay; and when they wearied of their speculations they sat pondering

gloomily, each in his own heart, the different darkness in which we have our mortal birth.

The next day she came early to the prison. It was a wet day, and it angered her, for she was a woman made for the sunshine. As imprudent as she was impulsive, she took no pains to preserve the good-will it had pleased her to buy on the previous day. She spoke peremptorily to the jailer, and manifested without restraint her contempt and loathing for the situation in which she found herself.

As her eyes pierced the gloomy room their sullen stare suddenly turned to one of passionate anger. Olivia was walking in the more quiet space at the end of the room, and she had a babe in her arms. Its white puny face lay against her bosom, and she was softly singing it to sleep. Anastasia stood still a moment and looked at her. The gray dress, the square of white lawn folded across her breast, the placid face, irritated her beyond control. She remembered at the moment what her father had said of the care given him by the Prideaux, and it struck her only as a piece of impertinent interference with a life too weak to resent it. She walked straight to Olivia.

"Your servant, Mistress Prideaux. I take credit to myself for my forethought in sending you here. 'T was for my father's sake I did it, and sure the motive will be excuse enough for the deed. But faith! I have no taste for your further company." She made a scornful courtesy with the words, drawing down her handsome brows in a black frown.

"Thou sent me not. I came here for the love of God, and out of charity for thy father's desolate condition."

"Then pray make your charity a large claim on the Almighty. Faith! I hope he may be so good as to

pay you, for I vow I have not a fair word or a gold piece for you."

"Thou art freely welcome for God's sake."

"Where is Nat Kelder? 'T is said you were in London in his company, and that you found the excuse of your father to follow him to Appleby. Fie! fie! I would you had more modesty or more pride."

Olivia answered her not. She still continued her walk, but she had ceased singing, and her cheeks were flaming with indignation.

"Answer me, Mistress."

Then the sick woman turned and looked at Anastasia, and a virago called Moll Bassing went close to her, and putting her hands upon her hips, defied her by the dumb provocation of a face shoved in closest proximity.

"Off, you pestilent creature!"

"Off thyself! Or if thou be so fain for a fight, look 'ee here!" And she bared her brawny arms, and doubled her huge red fists in Anastasia's face.

"Moll, be quiet. Thou knowest well that nothing can harm me."

"A God's-blessing on thee, Mistress! 'T would be a hard death for any who tried to harm thee here." Then addressing Anastasia: "Now, Mistress Penny-Pride be off! Go thy ill ways. This room is for better folks than such as thou be."

Anastasia looked scornfully at the woman; she despised her brutal passion, and mocked it. Turning to Olivia with a laugh, she said, "So this is one of your friends, Mistress Prideaux. I ever thought you were base-born."

"Base-born! Hear her! hear her!"

The women were now all talking together, and the room was in a tumult. Anastasia stood her ground, but

there was a look of terror in her eyes. She knew they were quite capable of giving her a far more severe punishment than ever Chenage had attempted.

Then Olivia, holding the babe in her left arm, put her right hand upon their leader. "Moll, thou must sit down and be quiet. If thou strikest, thou wilt hurt me most of all."

Her voice, so calm and even, had an authority they had learned to love and a charm they could not resist. They obeyed her at once, dropping their hands, but still muttering threats as Olivia turned to Anastasia.

"Mistress de Burg, be pleased, for thy own sake, to remove at once. Here is danger for thee, though none for me. I wish not to see thee hurt." And though the proud woman stood flashing hatred and scorn on the speaker, she was yet insensibly controlled by her stern, still face and the calm, positive voice with which she commanded her obedience.

"I owe you somewhat already, Olivia Prideaux, and you may add this impertinence to the bill."

Then there was another passionate outcry from Moll Bassing and her companions, and the jailer angrily strode toward the group.

"Moll, I will give both you and the fine madam you are quarrelling with a taste of my whip if you keep not the peace."

"Oh, jailer, kind jailer, take us both to task! I'd say 'thank 'ee for fifty,' if you give her likewise."

"Mistress de Burg," urged Olivia, "I pray you dispute no further, but go at my word. You do but provoke those that you must needs obey."

"Well, then, 't is no shame to flee from such a rabble lot. Jailer, open the door."

"Patience, Mistress. This is my house, and, by

Heaven ! 't is easier to get in than to get out. Go into the passage-way and cool yourself. I would not have you set the town on fire."

She gave Olivia one steady, vengeful look before she went, and Olivia, still holding the child close to her breast, looked steadily back at her. And Anastasia was astonished. For in that moment she saw, not the gentle Quaker maiden, but a tall, noble-looking woman, holding her head high in conscious rectitude, and glowing with sinless indignation at outrage unnecessary and unprovoked.

CHAPTER XVI.

MISTRESS OF CHENAGE.

“We do not know when we shall pass through a day — the child of the sun — with never-failing good ; for currents run this way and that, bringing both pleasures and sorrows.”

“For the sower of the seed is the author of the whole harvest of mischief.”

TO Kelderby, between the sea and the mountains, winter came early. It was yet September, but the air was chilly, and Nature was facing the inevitable with that sad patience which is so characteristic of the last days of autumn. The sea lay quiet, colourless, mournful. The mountain-tops were invisible, their shoulders covered with a shady mantle of clouds, their feet sandaled with fir forests, sounding softly the lament of ancient days. Like a gloomy lake of purplish barrenness were the distant moors. Nearer at hand the cattle and sheep stood mournfully among the bracken, now every colour but green, — amber, crimson, lilac, ivory, and russet-brown. In the stubble crows were calling in hoarse, coarse voices to a flight of fieldfares rushing past them in hurry or fear. Where the meadows skirted the village, boys were playing football ; and old men leaning over the stone wall watched the ball rise against the gray sky, and listened for the thud with which it fell to the ground.

The baron saw these things with a sigh, and then turned to the windows which looked into the garden.

The flowers, the bees, the birds, the butterflies, were all gone away. A solitary robin on a bare rose-tree sang their requiem, or perhaps the song of their resurrection; for his trilling ended upon his highest notes, and had a tone of triumph in it. And in the garden there was still beauty. The eglantine rods waved their small scarlet balls; the ivy was chapleted with jet; the privet had black clusters that gleamed like glass. For these faithful plants wear their memorials of summer until the snow buries them.

Such scenes speak with solemn eloquence to age. Kelder took the sermon into his heart, and then turned his face from the outside world. The world inside was far more cheerful. The low, long room, with its dark walls, its handsome furniture, its bright hearth, was made still more delightful by the pleasantly thoughtful woman spinning in its light and warmth. For, in spite of her impulsive temper and ready tongue, Lady Kelder was capable of great restraints where her husband was concerned. She understood his reverie. The patience of his face and attitude asked for her respect, and she gave it. She knew that his solitary and silent moods were peopled with far higher thoughts than she could share; then she was content to sit patiently in the outer sanctuary of his life. But when he pushed his chair toward the fire, and sitting down, looked into her face with a smile, she gladly welcomed back to her a companionship full of sweetness and strength and confidence.

“We shall have a storm anon, Joan.”

“I fear it. And, dear me! I do wish Nathaniel was at liberty to attend a little to his own affairs.”

“He is constrained, and I trust willingly, to do his duty.”

“A gadabout kind of duty it is. Never at home.”

“I wonder, Joan, if Mistress Chenage went to Appleby?”

“Make yourself certain of it. Would Anastasia miss an opportunity to display herself? I am sure that the moon would sooner fail in her orbit. But you may certify all wonders now, for I hear my son’s voice!” Her face shone, and she rose up hastily from her wheel.

Into the still old house there came with Nathaniel, not hurry or tumult, but a sense of most abundant life. His presence filled the room like sunshine. He kissed his mother, and gave both hands to his father, and let his bright, sensitive face rest upon them, and upon each familiar object, with a proud thankfulness.

Quickly the whole house felt his home-coming. Voices and movements of unusual brightness and pleasant hurry passed through it. The baron, restless with expectation, walked up and down the room. Jael brought forward a small table and spread upon it spiced brawn, cold partridge, and the wheaten loaf. An apple tart and a pitcher of thick cream edged the more substantial dishes. Wine and Old October were placed within his choice. Lady Kelder watched these preparations with a thoughtful smile, and to crown them brought the chased silver tankard which she had given her son on his twenty-first birthday.

In a short time Nathaniel was ready for the meal. He had changed his clothing, and removed all traces of travel, save such as defied outward renovation. But these were very marked. He was worn and weary-looking. His soul had evidently wasted his body. He had the appearance of a man who had lacked comforts, but who had not lacked fatigue and mental worry.

But it was pleasant to see the evident enjoyment with which he sat down to his own table, — his grateful face,

his whispered thanksgiving, the hearty, healthful portion which he meted out to his necessities. And though it may not be a very exalted pleasure to watch those we love enjoying a good meal, it is at least a very real one. The father and mother looked at the young man with delight, and doubled the delight by a constant interchange of glances which expressed their mutual satisfaction. And Nathaniel, though hungry, remembered that his parents had a very reasonable curiosity, and as he cut the generous slices of brawn he was saying, —

“My Uncle Sanderson hath a very lively gratitude to you. Doubtless he will repay the gold, and in the mean time he hath given us a good gage for it. They were full of trouble, and my Aunt Ann had lost her health on the matter.”

“Ann was ever a whimperer when things went not as she would have them. I hope now she will be so wise as to keep her husband out of folly. In these troublous times that is the first duty of wives.”

The baron smiled faintly at this little home thrust, and asked, “What news have you of Cousin De Burg?”

“De Burg hath been strangely ill. ’T was feared that he would never recall his senses. God be thanked, that terror is passed!”

“In what condition is he now?”

“He is very weak. Two men carried him to his trial. One could have borne the burden, so much hath he fallen away.”

“What hath been done in his affairs, Nathaniel?”

“He goes to London, — to the Tower. His estate is sequestered to the Commonwealth, with such modest allowance from it as will pay his needful expenses in prison.”

“I do not rejoice over him,” said Lady Kelder,

“ though he has but gotten the wages he earned. They who kindle a fire must put up with the smoke. And as he could not bear wealth well, he must learn how poverty will bear itself. Was Mistress Chenage at the trial? ”

Nathaniel's face darkened as he answered, “ She was there. I think, however, that the Protector himself judged both De Burg and Prideaux, or the one had got less than his deserts and the other more ; for Anastasia had won the judges ere her father came to his trial, and her passion at their decision in Prideaux's case showed that she intended him more harm than he got.”

“ George Fox has been in London again. He may have moved Cromwell about both men.”

“ Cromwell is froward in himself to render justice. But herein some one had taught him particulars, for after the judges were on the bench, and the assize opened, a special messenger arrived and delivered them in open court two papers, and I am most sure their superscription was in the Protector's handwriting. In De Burg's case the verdict was, without doubt, unexpected, for Mistress Chenage showed a temper of disappointment beyond all womanliness. Nor did she company with the judges afterward.”

“ What said she, Nathaniel? ”

“ Dear mother, 't would be unprofitable and fretting to repeat her. She is the sort of woman who cannot miscarry in her undertakings without calling earth and heaven to witness what wrongs she suffers.”

“ Indeed, 't is said her tongue hath driven her husband beyond seas.”

“ Pray God her intents were not sharper than her words ! I think, indeed, that Anastasia's heart is worse than her tongue.”

“ What mean you? ”

“Nay, I will not shape my suppositions. I doubt that Chenage forgot that the enemy he neither suspected nor feared was the most dangerous.”

“What heard you of his strange disappearance?”

“A confused report passed through my ears, but full of hurry and unlikely dread. Le Tall whispers of the Devil and bottomless perdition. Others say he prodigally threw his life away, and now sits in hell brooding o’er the unprofitable escape. ’T is certain his wife mourns not for his fate; she laments it o’er much. Great sorrows find not leisure for such complaining.”

“Hath De Burg left for London?”

“He was most anxious to leave. The Tower is a palace to the hole in which he has suffered so much; ’t is also, he says, ‘a prison befitting his rank.’ And though he could scarce whisper, he made shift to tell me that King Charles would pay a brave rent for his lodging.”

“Is there good-will between you?”

“He is as grateful as a man can be who reviles fate for giving him back life through such hands as mine. Anastasia travels with him. She will pillow his way with her enchantments. I think surely the officers on guard will carry him all the way in their arms if she but smile and ask them. Never has she been so radiantly beautiful; yet never have I thought her so little to be wished for, so much to be dreaded.”

“We carry the character of our souls mystically in our faces, Nathaniel. What says the son of Sirach? ‘A man may be known by his look, and one that hath understanding by his countenance, when thou meetest him.’ If God giveth wisdom to conjecture the countenance, it is as legible as a book, read in less time, and far less apt to deceive us; but in this matter God speaketh often to men and they heed him not.”

“You are quite right, Baron. As for Anastasia, the woman is pretty handsome, but she is no miracle. I can never believe her beauty able to smite any sensible man. Pray God she do nothing worse than smile her father an easy journey to a sad enough place !”

Presently the baron said, “I have been thinking of Roger Prideaux. You say the Protector judged his case also?”

“I am sure of it. He has been fined three thousand pounds for his imprudent hospitality.”

“A lighter punishment than I expected for him.”

“Punishment is the wrong word, sir. Prideaux was unworldly-wise, but otherwise guiltless of any fault ; and Cromwell, who is a discerner of men and of spirits, knew so much.”

“Were there any new particulars in the trial?”

“None. The evidence taken in Kendal was gone over but hurriedly, for the judges were aware that the Protector had already sifted it ere he advised the sentence.”

“Did Anastasia appear against Prideaux?”

“Yea, and her fair face and bitter words had wrought his ruin if his case had not been taken into a higher court by George Fox. For surely I think it must have been Fox, — or you, dear father?”

“I made no special pleading for Prideaux. Cromwell asked me concerning the man, and I spoke the truth as I believed it.” Then the eyes of father and son met with an understanding in them, full of sympathy and gratitude.

“Was the Quakeress present?”

“Her evidence was required.”

“Truly 't was a time for both women to make a show of their beauty and virtues. Let me see them as they

appeared. I have the curiosity which is natural, I am sure."

"Anastasia was dressed in black velvet with many gold ornaments. She held a little court of the lawyers and magistrates, and her brilliant smiles won the jury ere they had seen the prisoner. When Prideaux entered she looked at him as the hunter looks at the creature already in the toils."

"And the Quakeress?"

"She sat with her aunt under the eyes of Anastasia, and within hearing of her malicious words. But Olivia's soul was refuged in a height beyond both."

"Was she looking handsomely? Was she dressed so as to win the good-will of observers?"

"She trusted in something more than beauty and fine raiment."

"Poor silly one! Has she no worldly wisdom? Could no one tell her that a good suit of clothes wins many a suit at law, — that a fair face is a good case, as justice now goes?"

"Olivia wore the sober garments which best become a woman. She is lovely enough to need not the adornment of gay cloth and gold and jewels. I would that you had seen her. You would have thought better of all other women for her sake."

"Indeed, I know not. A woman so wondrous fair might surely have asked of her beauty whatever good influence it had to help her father's case. Men are men, and not angels, Nathaniel."

"Then men should not be tempted to injustice, even though it tended to mercy. Olivia had a surer friend than her own loveliness. 'God was on our side,' she said to me after the trial. 'Oh, I knew well in whom I trusted! I said, "Our Father which art in heaven, save my father." And he saved him.'"

“Yet he has three thousand pounds to pay.”

“She prayed not for his gold, but for his life.”

“Three thousand pounds! 'Tis a big price for a single guest. He will entertain no more strangers, I think.”

“Prideaux would shelter a flying man to-morrow. So would Olivia.”

“These Quakers are good at holdfast. They get an idea —”

“A conviction, Mother.”

“A conviction, then, — for instance, that it is wrong to give hat-honour to any creature, and they will rot in prison or hang in chains rather than uncover their heads. Faith! their religion is in their hats, as Samson's strength was in his hair. Surely, Nathaniel, they are very poor creatures. If they were not, some would say a good word for them; but Independents, Presbyterians, Baptists, and Episcopalians are all against a Quaker.”

“I confess it. And there is excellent reason for their hatred. Men who can live a life of the strictest piety and the most sublime faith without the help of churches must be stumbling-blocks and rocks of offence to the priests of every creed. Churches are everything to priests that Diana was to the silversmiths of Ephesus. No wonder they cry out, and make an uproar, and hale Quakers to prison; for their craft is in danger if men press beyond all forms and symbols and worship the Spirit in the spirit.”

“Nothing but spirit, spirit, spirit, and not a word of sacraments and the ministry! No, I will not disdain the helps which God has provided. Losing myself in a wilderness, and knowing nothing, and being nothing, and having no will and no desires of my own, is but a poor exchange for the comfort of prayers and sacra-

ments, and the shelter of the Church, and the advices of the priest. Until God gives me wings, I shall be so wise as to use my feet, Nathaniel."

The baron smiled, and Nathaniel leaned toward the earnest little lady and kissed her. She had the last word in the argument, and it satisfied her. With a more benignant face she asked, "What is to be done to that poor serving-man?"

"God has taken him. He was dying when I reached Appleby. Mother, I will tell you a great thing of that poor serving-man. He had saved three hundred pounds; he spent it all in Appleby jail. Many wretched men, dying slowly for small debts, he set at liberty. All prisoners for conscience' sake shared it to the last penny. In his thin, aged arms five men died happy for the great hope he had taught them. It appeared as if the strength and spirit of his youth came back to answer his great need of them."

"I think that he was a good man."

"Indeed, Father, he was a soul of God's best earthly mould; wise in that learning that comes by reverence. Concerning the many entrances to scientific divinity Asa knew nothing at all; but he had found out the one only door to the kingdom of heaven."

"Is Appleby jail so bad a place as it is said to be?"

"'T is like all the jails in England, Father; a hideous place in which dwell murder, envy, baleful destinies, squalid filth, wasting corruption, and many diseases. Birth is there, and death; slumber and wakefulness; the cry of the wicked in his punishment; the cry of the child in its innocent suffering; discordant clamours; the solemn whisper of prayer; yea, and the still small voice of God."

"Yet, Nathaniel, a hard place to die in."

“Asa lay down there as calmly as a child lies down to slumber on its mother’s knee. ’Tis beyond doubt that he had glorious company all down that ‘narrow road shelving to the grave,’ which George Fox foresaw for him. And his last mortal word was a glad cry of recognition, — Felicia !”

“Felicia ?”

“’Twas his wife’s name. She left him many years ago.”

“So does death make marriage.”

The baron spoke with great emotion, and Lady Kelder lifted her eyes to her husband’s face and caught the tender look with which he was regarding her. It was a moment in which all felt their immortality. But it is only for a moment the mortal can bear what is above mortality, and the first natural rebound of spiritual exaltation is to touch earth again. Lady Kelder rose, brought her wheel to her hand, and began to spin. And as she gently turned it she asked, —

“Did Prideaux come back with you, Nathaniel ?”

“No ; the payment of his fine was to be secured, and certain formalities to be gone through, which may delay him several days. He is determined upon the sale of Sandys.”

“That seemeth strange, Nathaniel,” said the baron. “Three thousand pounds could not endanger Sandys beyond relief.”

“And if it be truly got, it may be comfortably kept, Nathaniel.”

“Yea, Mother. Prideaux could keep Sandys, but his confinement hath changed him so much that he desires not to keep it. Seeing, and hearing of, and sharing in the affliction of his people, hath made his faith a burning flame. He will no longer dwell in comfort while

they are scattered through all the dungeons in England. He has determined to join Fox, and visit the oppressed in every town, and minister to their bodily and spiritual necessities."

"The Vagrant Act is manifestly made for such travelling Quakers. He will be in prison again."

"In every prison he will find men to preach to, and friends to help."

"Self-denying, I confess. But what will become of his fair daughter?"

"She goes with her aunt to Mettelane." He rose with the words, and proposed to his father a walk among the farm offices. "The men are coming in from the fields," he said, "and I want to talk to them." In reality he feared any conversation with his mother concerning Olivia.

So they left the room together, and Jael entered as they did so. She began to clear the table, and for some minutes Lady Kelder did not speak to her. Among the white flax her white hands moved, and the wheel hummed gently to her indeterminate and changing thoughts.

"Jael!"

The woman stood still upon the hearth and looked inquiringly at her mistress.

"Jael, I have heard that the serving-man Asa Bevin is dead. I think surely that he was a good man,—in intent,—and it may be that God will accept the intention."

"Ambrose has told us about him. Ambrose went often to the jail with my young master. Asa Bevin did his whole duty. He always did that, did Asa."

"One should be sure that it is a duty, Jael, before we give life away. Life is a great gift, happen the Lord likes us to value it."

"True, my Lady. But if you are going to do anything for other people's lives, you will often have to lose your own, and make no words about it. It is a grand thing, my Lady, to over-get the world, and count death eternal life."

"Unreasonableness is bound up in the heart of a Quaker. If Asa would have taken off his hat, he could have kept out of jail and been alive to-day."

"Likely. More body and less soul had served him better for this world."

"What said Ambrose of the trial?"

"That the judges had ready-made verdicts. 'Tis said that the Pro —"

"I know, and 'tis like enough. Was Mistress Prideaux present?"

"At her father's side."

"And Master Nathaniel?"

"By her side."

"I feared it. God-a-mercy, Jael! what is to be done in this affair?"

"What we can't manage it is best to leave, my Lady. We only spoil what we have no charge to put different. Ambrose said a handsomer pair never stood together; and 'tis certain that the Quaker maid far outshone the young widow, — if widow she be."

"What was said of Mistress Chenage?"

"I'd as lief say nothing of her. She is a naught of all naughts. First ogling the judges, and then rating them, and anon turning on Master Nathaniel and Mistress Prideaux as if she had a mind to kill them. Most people thought her off-at-side with temper, and I am much of their mind. Handsome, but a bad heart in her; and, like the cats, never doing good but out of an ill intention."

"'T is said Master Prideaux will leave Sandys."

"I heard tell. 'T was a bad sign to see such heavy crops on the land, and I said so; a fey harvest, — the last for him."

"In many things you are too superstitious, Jael."

"God-a-mercy! No, my Lady. I but read the every-day book open before my eyes. Thus and so, from generation to generation; and why would n't it be true? When Lucy Halliday's baby died I said to her, 'Pour all your milk on the ground, or death will come again;' and she said, 'Nay, she would n't be that silly;' and so she kept her milk and lost the next bairn also."

"A pagan libation, Jael. Why should Christian mothers mind it?"

"I strain not my wits over why and wherefore, my Lady. Many happenings inner and outermer, and no reasons given us for them."

"What a noise the birds are making above the windows!"

"Philip the sparrow. Brawling, impudent birds, always wrangling and always eating. Very common birds, my Lady; no quality among them. But when they are getting ready for bed it is near shutting-in-time." Then Jael moved toward the door, and Lady Kelder began to turn her wheel again; but she sighed, and her face had the perplexed look of one who finds life a riddle beyond the solving.

Nathaniel had avoided a discussion concerning Olivia on the night of his return, but in the morning he voluntarily sought his mother's confidence. Something in his face and manner revealed his purpose before he spoke, and Lady Kelder was at once in arms. She lifted her face with a smile to meet him, but she inwardly resented the fact that Olivia was to be forced upon her notice.

She had a score of more interesting things to discuss, and she thought Nathaniel might have waited her pleasure. In fact, she was very much in the same temper that made the wolf find the lamb guilty of disturbing the stream, whether the stream flowed up or down.

She talked nervously and hastily of the dahlia bulbs and the apple-gathering; of Nathaniel's own need of a new velvet suit; of his father's failing health; of her own numerous household anxieties. She felt her son's divination of her motive, and at last she could no longer talk against the pained intelligence of his face. She became suddenly silent, and then made as if she would put by her wheel and leave the room.

"Stay, Mother. I wish to speak to you about Mistress Prideaux."

"God's mercy! Am I never to lose the echo of a name so hateful to me? I have done my best to avoid this question; if you force it, Nathaniel, you must take the result from me."

"I do so love the girl, dear mother."

"Faith, sir! If confessions are to be made, let me tell you — I do so hate the girl."

"But why?"

"There is neither why nor wherefore about it. You have no right to ask me why; and indeed I have other questions of far greater weight to occupy my conscience with."

"I intend to marry Olivia Prideaux, Mother."

"Well, you have said so before; but between saying and doing is a big journey."

"Her father is determined to go to the American colonies. I have won the girl's love. If I marry her not, I force her to a long and dangerous voyage, and a

life for which she is totally unfit. 'T is my part of honour, as well as of love, to offer her now the protection of my name and home."

"Well, then, what home?"

"Kelderby is so large, Mother."

"'T is a world too small for Olivia Prideaux; and here she comes not while I stand as its mistress. Bring me a daughter like Mary Bellingham, and I will share all I have with her; or your cousin Singleton; or even Jean Raby. Faith, Nathaniel! though I love a good woman, I care not for saints and angels,—till I have a translation."

"Dear Mother, be patient with me. Will you let me have the use of Swaffham Manor House? You go not into it, nor nigh it, and it is quite empty."

"Swaffham! My own dower house! No, sir! If your father dies before I do, I must go to Swaffham, and you will bring that Quakeress here. Do you think I will give fate such an opportunity? To step down from Kelderby to Swaffham is ill enough; but to take her place, and let her take mine,—that is a thing beyond my contemplation, and ought to be beyond yours. A good son has never dared to think that his mother was mortal."

"Be not so unjust in your words, Mother; your thoughts, I know, condemn them. And if you will not love my wife, to force you is above humanity. I must pray God—"

"No, sir! I charge you make no such prayer for me. And as for a home, why go you not to Sandys?"

"Sandys is to be sold."

"To pay the Quaker's fine?"

"No 'needs be' for that end; but, as I told you, Roger Prideaux goes to America, and will turn all his estate into gold."

“Faith! if he goes nigh to the Plymouth Colony, he will get his deserts. Brave Endicott and the priests who whet the swords and knot the scourges for him are such men as fear not to handle Quakers, be they men or women.”

“Dear Mother, ’t is the thought of this, and of Olivia’s upright soul, and of her danger —”

“There is no occasion for Olivia and her father to cross oceans in search of such dangers. Because they are stubborn in folly, shall I give up my home to save the girl? I trow not!”

“One room, Mother —”

“If she had one room, I should feel her in every room. I will not have her here, nor in any place that is mine. Take that for your answer, sir. And I shall count you very much mine enemy if you name the girl in my hearing again.”

She rose up with the words, and looked steadily at her son. Her face was flushed, her head thrown haughtily backward; but through her misty, troubled eyes her heart denied every cruel word she had uttered. And her son’s attitude smote her. He stood by the high oak chimney-piece, his teeth firmly set in his under lip. Despairing anger widened his mournful eyes. He was the image of one who had been wronged by a love that should have succoured him. She could not bear to leave him without a word more like conciliation, and with the open door in her hand she said gently, —

“Any girl but this girl I will love for your sake, my son.”

“There is no other, Mother.”

Then she closed the door, and went upstairs and cried bitterly; and would listen to none of Jael’s comforting, because she was sure Jael in her heart sided

against her. She complained that she had no friend in her trouble, — not even the baron, who ever since he saw Olivia in London had been weak-hearted, and she verily believed double in the matter.

Perhaps the baron was ; at any rate, his authority was sufficient to prevent the open sore of perpetual discussion. Nathaniel went to and fro between Kelderby and Sandys, and his visits were not commented on. And precious as the last sands of life were these hours to the lovers ; for they knew that as soon as Sandys was sold some change must come. They inquired not of the future, but took day by day as a special gift of happiness.

In December, Roger unexpectedly closed the house. He was going through England with George Fox ; and perhaps also he thought that Nathaniel was acquiring an undue influence over his daughter. So Olivia went to Mettelane with her aunt, and fair Sandys was left alone with its memories.

Just before Christmas, Nathaniel was one day on his road to Mettelane, and on Kendal bridge he met Anastasia face to face. She had a strange gentleman in her coach, and three serving-men rode behind her. She looked at Nathaniel fixedly, with burning eyes ; but this day Nathaniel did not salute her. Never before had he failed to uncover his head when they met, and she was passionately angry at the implied slight. She put her head out of the window of the coach, and called after him, —

“So-ho, Cousin ! Are you become a Quaker, that you refuse me hat-honour ? or has the Quakeress forbidden you ? Faith, you are a very scurvy fellow ; and I have a mind to send my footman to chastise you.” The words were emphasized by the mocking laugh he knew so well ; and for a moment his face burned, and

he had a desperate longing to make her companion pay for the impertinence. Then he thought of Olivia, and the temptation passed with the thought, and he rode onward whispering her name.

Anastasia was going to Chenage. She was going to carry out a little scheme of revenge which she had long contemplated, and she was in high spirits. Her meeting with Nathaniel made her dull and gloomy; but as soon as she came in sight of the gray, mournful-looking house she flung aside the depression. A dazzling light sprang into her eyes. Her lips parted in smiles. Her cheeks flushed vividly, and she impatiently pushed from them the long, drooping curls of her dark hair.

The gates were locked, and the dogs prowling about the inclosure like wild beasts. Their furious barking, and the clatter made upon the gates by her attendants, at length brought both Gilbert and Thomas to demand the reason of it. They were confounded by the apparition of their mistress. They trembled at the sound of her voice, at the nameless atmosphere she brought into the house with her.

Never had a meal been cooked in Chenage with such expedition as was cooked for Anastasia that day. While the servants were all busy about it, muttering beneath their breath their fears and their opinions, she suddenly stepped into the kitchen, and asked if they had heard anything of their master; and there was so much suspicion and anger in her voice that only Audrey found courage to answer with a short but positive negative.

Anastasia fancied there was a tone of insolence in the word, and she looked at the woman. It was a cleaving glance. It made Audrey remember all the cruelty and petty insolence of her small triumphs. It made her heart turn cold with fear. It made her resolve to leave

Chenage on the following day. Even when her mistress went back to the parlour, she could not join in the low, timorous conversation that followed. She went to the door, and looked out. It was snowing, and the cold was intense; but she whispered to herself, "To-morrow I go, if she stays."

Five minutes after she had made this resolution, one of the men brought from London by Anastasia informed Audrey that she was wanted. An excessive terror seized her; she went trembling to answer the call. She was at no time a pleasant-looking old woman. Cruelty, avarice, sensuality, had left their marks upon her hard face; and her bleared, soulless eyes essayed in vain their usual insolent stare. When Anastasia looked at her, she dropped their fat lids, and stood in half-rebellious humility before the mistress whose wrongs and sorrows she had so often insulted.

"We will go through the house, Audrey. Get the keys and unlock the rooms."

"They are unlocked, Mistress."

"All of them?"

"I would n't wonder, Mistress. Master liked them unlocked,—he did that."

Anastasia laughed; but it was a laugh which made Audrey wish that she had not spoken of her master.

"Go before us."

From parlour to chamber they went,—Audrey first, Anastasia and the stranger following. She called him Captain Temple, and she had a good deal of conversation with him regarding improvements and refurnishing; and Audrey understood from its tone that it was the intention of Anastasia to live at Chenage a great part of her time.

"If Roger Chenage should come back," she said with

an indescribable air, — “if he should come back, I wish to be here to welcome him.” Audrey listened to her with fear and wonder. She was constantly appealed to regarding the traditions of certain rooms; but ever, amid her babbling recollections of former squires and dames of Chenage, she was trying to recall the special indignities and unkindnesses she had offered to its present mistress.

In a little corner room of the second story, which afforded a magnificent view of the country, the party stood silent for a few moments; and Audrey, dropping a most unusual courtesy, turned to leave.

“Stop! we have not yet seen the upper floor.”

“The garret, Mistress? — the lumber-room? There is nothing else.”

“Only the most interesting room in the house, — the room in which Lady Cecilia died; I mean, in which she was done to death. Captain Temple is a relative of hers; he wishes to see it, Audrey.”

“I protest, Mistress.”

“I protest, Audrey, that you will open it.”

With a white, sullen face Audrey produced the key, and preceded the party upstairs. In a few moments they stood within a large apartment containing nothing whatever but the iron staple and chain and bracelet, as Chenage had described them. It was lighted by several windows; but the chain was too short to admit of a prisoner reaching any of them. Captain Temple looked the horror he felt. Anastasia touched the instruments of cruelty, and then turned to the trembling woman at her side.

“How long was the Lady Cecilia a prisoner here?”

“Eleven years. She was mad.”

“No wonder. Who had charge of her?”

“I—I was very kind to her.”

“The better for you; for 'tis said her ghost walks here all night, and I intend you to keep it company. Well, if you did her no wrong you need not fear it.”

“Mistress, have pity!”

“Such pity as you gave you shall have.”

“I shall die; I shall die of fright!”

“Faith! no one will be sorry. So this was to have been my chamber,”—she looked with kindling anger around her,—“and you, woman, my jailer! Give me the key of the bracelet!”

“Mistress!”

“Give me the key!”

She was in a blazing passion, and the stamp of her foot on the floor was like a blow to the almost fainting woman. But she put her hand in her pocket and found the key, and with an almost inarticulate cry for mercy she handed it to Anastasia.

“Captain, lock the ring round her right wrist. It is your part of a righteous retribution.”

Then the woman grovelled in abject terror and humiliation at Anastasia's feet, and Anastasia spurned her away with loathing and hatred. There was no pity in her reproaches; there was still less pity in the stern silence of the man who was Lady Cecilia's avenger; and in a few moments Audrey was learning by personal experience something of the misery she had inflicted.

“Make haste to die; it is your only hope of release.” And with these words Anastasia locked the door and went leisurely with her companion down the dark, winding staircase. Her light laugh and the tapping of her shoes on the oak floors were strangely distinct in the uncanny silence of the lonely house.

After she had eaten and drank she called in every one

of the old servants of Chenage and dismissed them. Gilbert, who had been all his life in the house, pleaded that he had no relatives left and knew not where to go.

“I will warrant you have money saved, for you are a thief. I have seen you selling the wheat out of the granary.”

“The master has four hundred pounds and some more of mine.”

“A likely story, truly! Where is your proof? and I will pay you.”

“Alack-a-day! I have never a scrap of writing. The master knew; the master knew—”

“For my part I am sure that you are an impudent liar.”

“Audrey knows too, Mistress; Audrey knows—”

“Audrey, indeed! Audrey will say whatever I want her to say. Audrey is in my service now, and I will keep her where you cannot teach her what to say. Thomas, be off from Chenage by noon to-morrow—by daylight were better, lest worse befall you. Had you also money with the master?” Then, turning on the women, she said with a double fierceness: “Nan Kerr, I hear you came from Carlisle. Be as far as you can on the way back to Carlisle ere my sleep is over. Jess, ‘pretty Jessie,’—so your master called you, I think,—you are a bad wench, and out of house you go at daylight. Wages, did you say? Not a farthing bit. The master owes you money belike, also. Such a parcel of rogues in a house! I wish I may keep my temper long enough to clear it of you.”

“Mistress, mistress, I cannot leave Chenage!” cried Gilbert, piteously. “I am an old man. I have no home but Chenage. I have no friends.”

“Bethink you, sirrah. One day I wished to leave

Chenage to see my friends, and you told me that the dogs would not permit me. The dogs can drive out as well as in. Do you understand?"

"God help me! I am old and friendless, and my gold is gone."

"Ask the Devil's help; 't were better you did not remind God of your existence. Ask the Devil's help. He knows you."

"Mistress," said Jess, "I always liked you. I will serve you faithful. Let me stay. 'T is a long way back to Conistone, and over mountains —" Then Jess ceased speaking, for she saw her mistress toss her head and turn on her heel with an impertinent shrug, and she suddenly remembered that she had once answered her in the same manner. The action was too cleverly imitated to be mistaken, and the girl knew that all her entreaties would be in vain.

"All of you go, the sooner the better, and leave behind you some token for the constable. I know not what you may have taken from the house, but, faith! I'll find that out ere long. And, in earnest, I hold none of you innocent about the master. 'T will be seen yet that you did for him in some way. I find myself unable to endure you longer."

Then she turned her back upon the wretched group, and putting one hand upon Captain Temple's shoulder and one foot upon the bright brass fender, she began to sing, swaying herself to the melody with careless and graceful movements.

Temple looked at her with wondering admiration. He was an old man, and his strong face was bronzed with long sea-service. In an accidental meeting with Anastasia in London he spoke of his aunt's marriage to a Chenage, and then he heard of her miserable fate. He

had been accustomed to "right his own wrong;" he understood the feeling of Anastasia, and shared it. Her spirit was admirable in his eyes, and he rejoiced in the "accident" which had made her free. Her singing pleased him; he listened with a smiling face, and at the close of the verse said, —

"Compute me how much gold the young Earl of Southport would give to be here in my place."

"He is but a poor fellow, Captain, — a poor fellow who knows not what opportunity may do for love;" and then, laughing, she sang with a meaning and spirit not to be mistaken, —

"A silly shepherd woo'd, but wist not
How he might his mistress' favour gain;
For on a time they met, but kist not,
And ever after that he woo'd in vain.
Silly youth, why dost thou dally,
Having time and season fit?
Never stand on 'shall I,' 'shall I,'
Nor commend an after wit.
He that will not, when he may,
When he will, he shall get nay."

As she finished the song she brought the chess-board and arranged the pieces for a game with her companion; and she made her moves with as much consideration as if they were her only interest in life. The terror in the lonely room upstairs, the fear and anxiety in the kitchen, gave her satisfaction. She found pleasure in reflecting that her abrupt dismissal would send her men and women into the world under suspicions they could not remove, — that they were all without money, in a lonely, mountainous country, in midwinter, and at a time when there was a superfluity of servants.

After she had got a checkmate she pushed the board away, and sitting in the firelight, she told such tales of

her miserable marriage that the old man listening wished with a great oath that he had Chenage and all the servants of his wicked will under the hatches of his ship. And then such a strange light flashed into Anastasia's face that he stopped speaking and looked at her in wonder. Just a little more, and he would have read the whole story in her eyes.

He went to sleep trying to find it out. Anastasia slept not at all. She walked to and fro in the large, dim room, stopping to throw a fresh log on the fire, or to look at herself in the darkling mirror, or to open the door, and standing with head thrust forward, listen for any unusual noise downstairs—or upstairs.

She was on the watch, and would be until she had freed the house of every one connected with Chenage. "And then," she said softly, with a sigh of satisfaction—"and then we shall attend to Prideaux and the saint Olivia. Ha, ha! Revenge is a tasty morsel. No wonder the gods kept it for their private share."

At length she sat down before the blaze, and flung off her shoes and gown and all the restraints of her fine costume, and dozed and dozed and mused and dreamed, until the pallid dawn showed her a white, frozen stretch of moorland, and a sad, shivering group of men and women fighting their way across it.

She watched them a moment or two, and then cuddled herself comfortably among the lamb's-wool blankets and dreamed of what she had been thinking,—the great drift by Chenage Scour, which might, might—which might—be so dangerous for them.

XVII.

PARTING.

“But love can hope where reason would despair.”

“ Their free-bred soul
Went not with priests to school,
To trim the tippet and the stole,
And pray by printed rule ;
But they would cast the eager word
From their hearts' fiery core,
Smoking and red, as God had stirred
The Hebrew men of yore.”

“THE first cock of hay drives the cuckoo away ;”
and the Mettelane meadows were all sweet with hay, and the Mettelane woods empty of cuckoos. But the garden was ablaze with roses, and from the thickest coverts came the music of the nightingale ; in the day singing of the invisible sun treasured in his soul, in the misty midnight dreaming aloud his hymn of impossible love,—“O sun ! O sea ! O rose !”¹

It was the longest day in the year, and there were at least a dozen men and women making hay in the High Meadow. Nathaniel and Olivia sat under a great oak, both a little flushed with the unusual exercise. Olivia's hood was on her lap ; Nathaniel had also uncovered his head, and the cool west wind fanned them with the green leaves of the outstretched branches.

They were very happy. They were together, they had forgotten all time past, and they were not inclined

¹ Rückert.

to wonder about the future. They knew that when Sandys was sold there would be a great change, but until then they were taking the counsel of the wise son of Sirach, "Defraud not thyself of a good day."

Never had Nathaniel seen Olivia so charming. With the innocent gayety of a child she told him all about her simple life. Her head was resting against the huge brown trunk, her little feet just escaped the hem of her white dress, and their bronzed morocco shoes and silver latches gleamed among the green grasses around them. Sometimes they were silent for very happiness, and then they listened smiling to the rude chant of the labourers as they followed one another through and through the swaths of drying grass.

"Oh, the haymaking! the haymaking!
 And the shaking,
 And the raking,
 And the very merry making,
 Of the hay, of the hay!
 Of the hay, hay, hay!"

The musical repetition of the word and the rhythmic step and the charm of voices in unison were chorus to the drama in their hearts.

Suddenly Nathaniel felt an impulse irresistible and delightful, — a little madrigal long forgotten sprang to his lips, and he gave it utterance in a voice as clear and strong as the heart from which it came:—

"Like to Diana in her summer weed,
 Girt with a crimson robe of brightest dye,
 Goes fair Samela!
 Whiter than be the flocks that straggling feed,
 When washed by Arethusa faint they lie,
 Is fair Samela!"

"As fair Aurora in her morning gray,
 Decked with the ruddy glisten of her love,
 For she's Samela!"

Like lovely Thetis on a calm'd day,
 When as her brightness Neptune's fancy move —
 Shines fair Samela!

“Passeth fair Venus in her bravest hue,
 And Juno in the show of majesty,
 For she 's Samela!
 Pallas in wit, — all three, if you will view,
 For beauty, wit, and matchless dignity
 Yield to Samela!”

To Olivia, ignorant of the gods of ancient days, there was no express meaning in the words. But the dulcet measure of the music was a charming force. They rose, and hand in hand went through the fields singing of “Fair Samela.” For when the heart is full of rapture it recovers its spiritual language, and breaks forth into singing. The words make little matter. Nathaniel had not thought of “Fair Samela” for many a year; it was a song without words, as far as Olivia's intelligence of them went; but its *allegro maestoso* melody, full of slow periods and long movements, expressed, far beyond human language, the ravished fervidness of a love so noble that it must look to eternity for its highest fulfilment.

Softer and yet more penetrating grew the iterated lines, the words became living words, they floated into the warm atmosphere and lingered there; and the lovers felt no weight of mortal flesh, but seemed to float and glide with them through the glowing evening atmosphere, as if their will were motion and their love gave them wings.

At the garden gate Nathaniel ceased singing. They were going to enter common life again. They could hear Aunt Hannah calling to a servant to hasten the sunset meal, and the dairymaids in the home meadow calling the cows to the milking. But before he opened

the gate he took Olivia in his arms and kissed the rosy blush upon her cheeks, and the love-light shining through her dropped eyelids, and the almost visible love-words upon her lips: —

“Dearest Heart! Mine, and only mine?”

“Thine, beloved, and only thine.”

The words were like a golden band between them. Their clasped hands typified it. They stood still a moment to listen to a song-sparrow. He was singing on tiptoes, sparkling all over with little cries of happiness. The box-trees diffused a woody fragrance; the gold-dusted snapdragons, the stocks in scented blow, the white and purple fritillaries, and the sweetwilliam's homely smell were part and parcel with the marvel of the golden skies. Noticing nothing particularly, they felt the influences of every flower and every song, and light and shadow. They were so happy they forgot to hope and they forgot to fear. The present moment was a full cup.

With a low laugh they crossed the door-step together, and saw Roger Prideaux sitting at the open lattice. He turned to them a face full of affection, but they knew that they had come to a sorrowful hour. Roger was much changed. His face was lined with thought and suffering, his eyes were full of piercing inquiries, there was a lofty scorn of all human ambitions on his brow. He talked with Nathaniel, until the business of the day was over, about the sufferings of the Quakers and the rapid increase of the persecuted sect.

“But I have preached to the prisoners and the oppressed a great crusade, Nathaniel,” he cried. “We are going to America. In the silent forests of the new land the world has yet no thoroughfare, and we shall have peace and freedom to worship God.”

“Indeed, sir,” replied Nathaniel, “I have heard of strange cruelties practised in the Plymouth Colony, and against your own persuasion.”

“We shall not trouble the Plymouth Colony, and we shall do well and be happy. The men who have gathered around George Fox are the picked men from all creeds, — the men who desire God before all other things, and who abhor the selfish bargaining with priestcraft for a priceless heaven. And in this matter I am led by Best Wisdom ; for one night, as I pondered in my heart the right way, my hand turned the leaves of my Bible, and I heard the Voice say, ‘Read,’ and the Book was open at Ezekiel the thirty-fourth chapter, and on these words my eyes fell : —

“ ‘ And they shall dwell safely in the wilderness, and sleep in the woods.

“ ‘ And I will make them and the places round about my hill a blessing ; and I will cause the shower to come down in his season ; there shall be showers of blessing.

“ ‘ And the tree of the field shall yield her fruit, and the earth shall yield her increase, and they shall be safe in their land, and shall know that I am the Lord, when I have broken the bands of their yoke, and delivered them out of the hand of those that served themselves of them.’

“And I know, Nathaniel, that these words shall come to pass ; whether I live, or whether I die, the promise is sure. God shall give unto his people a great inheritance in the land to which they will assuredly go. I call thee to witness my words, for the promise is true.”

Nathaniel heard with a sinking heart, and when they were joined by Hannah Mettelane and Olivia he was determined to know how far this contemplated change would affect the future of Olivia and himself. She sat by her father’s side, and Hannah Mettelane sat near them with a piece of sewing in her hand. Nathaniel stood by the open casement, so that he commanded, as it were, the situation.

“Roger,” he said, speaking with a suddenness that gave to his voice a tone of disapproval or displeasure, — “Roger, what say you to my marriage with Olivia before you leave England?”

“Thou hast propounded to me a very hard question, Nathaniel, but ’t is one that must be speedily answered; for I have sold Sandys, and, if God so prosper me, I shall leave England in the first days of September.”

“But you cannot intend to take Olivia into the wilderness.”

“Canst thou truthfully make her thy wife? What home wilt thou take her to? Art thy father and mother ready to welcome her as their daughter? As for myself, I put my claims behind thine. I am going to a strange country. For God’s sake, or man’s sake, I am ready to be offered up in service of any kind.”

“Roger, I know that Nathaniel Kelder is in a hard strait; his affairs cannot be hurried. Let Olivia stay with me.”

“Nay, sister Hannah, I will not sanction that. There are two roads of duty, straight and plain, set before her. She is to be a daughter to me, she is to share my trials and comfort my sorrows; or else she is to be the wife of a good man, and the mother of children.”

“Between two ways, brother, there is often a middle way. Let Olivia take it.”

“No, no, Hannah! That middle way, neither this thing nor that thing, was the sin for which the Laodicean church was cursed. The work of moderation has the wages of moderation. My child shall have none of them. If she feel it to be her duty to marry Nathaniel, let me bless her in it and go on my own way. If for any reason this duty is not clear and evident, then she cannot desert the first duty of her life. She must be my daughter, or

she must be Nathaniel's wife. Wouldst thou have her sneak out of a hard duty and hide herself in the covert of Mettelane until she can reach her desire? If the fruit she wants is not ripe, wouldst thou have her to sit down under the tree and idly wait for it, or wouldst thou say, 'Do thy manifest and manifold duties, and in full time the fruit will ripen and sweeten, and thou mayst lawfully and truly have it'?"

"Olivia! Olivia!" Nathaniel went to her side and took her hands. "Speak for me, dear heart. Only you can know; only you can pity."

She lifted her face. It was white and sad. "Thou dost not suffer alone, Nathaniel. But Father has put my duty evidently before me, — this way or that way, and no easy middle way. I must go with my father, for thou art not free to marry me. I have seen Lady Kelder, and I know that her heart is set against me. But some day that happens which has been long waited for, and until then —"

"To-night we will have no decision. There must be ways and means to bring to pass my desire. I ask for a few hours, Father, — for you have given me so much right to use the name, — a few hours in which to try and bate something of my ill fortune."

"If thou beg me by that name, Nathaniel, I can by no means hinder thee."

He stayed for no longer parley; he forgot even the slight courtesies of leave-taking, — little ceremonies always respected and enjoyed, — and in less than ten minutes they heard his horse's hoofs beating the rocky road to Kendal. He changed his horse there, and then hurried on, and on, past Leavens and Arnside, and so into the lonely region of Silverdale.

Never had the indifference of Nature to the woes of

humanity seemed to him so cruel. In the soft moonlight the wide landscape lay in an ineffable pause, as if the trees and fields were dreaming; while the steadfast hills, like a vast staircase, went up and up to the clear skies. But his soul could not mount; she trailed her lagging pinions too near earth. Seaward there was a pulsating, tremendous vitality that oppressed him, and the black hull of a fishing-boat, tossing and wavering like a shadow amid uncertain gloom and solemn water, was the very emblem of his own shadowed and anxious life.

He had not taken the sea into his calculations; indeed he had forgotten the tide until he came to Kelder Neck and found the little isthmus impassable. His horse was then too weary to swim, so he awakened a farmer living near, and sought shelter until daylight.

Early in the forenoon he reached Kelderby. His mother heard his quick step on the flagged halls, and called him with a pleasant recognition. She was in the still-room with Jael, who was making poppy-water for a weak stomach. The long deal tables, polished with oatmeal until they glistened like ivory, were covered with bowls and bottles and platters holding their special cordials, sweet waters, mouth pastilles, odoriferant balls, balsams, and electuaries; with specifics for swooning of the head, weakness of the heart, decay of the spirit, and the coming on of colds.

“Well, Nathaniel, you have outrun your promise. I looked not for you so early. Have you had a love quarrel? Is there any new matter on hand?”

“Roger Prideaux has sold Sandys, and is going to America.”

“’Tis his own choice, and we will speak of happier things, it being necessary to mingle an electuary when one is in a good spirit. Jael, give me the honey and the

rue, and then see if there be a fresh trout to brown for your young master."

"I have eaten as I wish to, Mother, and I want instant speech with my father."

"He is in the rose walk; and he hath a pain in the head, and so is in poor condition for vexations, — if you will so far consider his infirmities."

Nathaniel glanced inquiringly at the slightly offended lady. She was measuring honey and rue with an attention which appeared to dismiss all other things, and the large linen apron which covered her dress, and her pinned-back hood-strings, gave her that stern look of preoccupation which he understood was to be respected. So he lifted his hat to her and went into the garden.

The baron was walking slowly in the rose alley. He was thinking of heavenly things, and his face had the rapture and peace of his thoughts. Nathaniel's greeting was therefore a slight jar, and he came back from the Delectable Mountains to Kelderby with an effort that left a wistful, far-off look in his eyes.

"Father!"

"Well, my son, I am here; though I confess when I was not here I was in a better place."

"Father, the pressure of my conditions must excuse my impatience, for I am in a great strait, and I look to you for help in the matter."

As he was speaking, Lady Kelder came forward. She had removed her apron, and was smoothing the folds of her silk dress as she approached. But she caught the sense of Nathaniel's words, and promptly answered them.

"Blessed be God! we are now used to trouble, Nathaniel, specially such as comes by the Quakers' road; and I'll warrant you have found the 'great strait' there, or nowhere."

“Mother, ’t is no longer a time for charges and recharges. I entreat you to give me help instead of words. Roger Prideaux goes to America in two months, and if I marry not his daughter he will take her with him.”

“You will take your father and me to heaven by exercising our patience, Nathaniel. The Prideaux again! I would they were gone to America, both of them, a year ago.”

Then Nathaniel turned to his father, and, holding out his hands with supplicating palms, said, “Sir, I love Mistress Prideaux. I must marry her, or I marry not at all. We have been comrades in arms, we have been friends in council, we have been father and son, and I have truly been obedient and faithful to you all my life. I can but love as my soul loves. Give me such consideration as you are able to in my trouble.”

“What do you desire, Nathaniel?”

“I desire to marry Olivia Prideaux ere her father leaves England. If I do not, then I must dread for her the ocean, and the pirates that infest the ocean; and if she ’scape these, you know well what brutal entreaties, what imprisonment and martyrdom, everywhere wait for those of her faith.”

“The very treatment they deserve, Nathaniel.”

“Dear mother — ”

“Nay, then, if I be ‘dear,’ let me speak my heart to you. Can you believe that I have the grace to hear a sermon every day in the week about the Prideaux? I tell you if there were none of the name in the world ’t would be no loss to me. If you had been Saint Paul, you had taken the Prideaux for a text. Your father and I are very weary of all concerning them. ’T is a great freedom you take, sir; and I bred you better, had not Mistress Prideaux spoiled you.”

She stood erect and quiet, with her arms folded across her breast, a very noble-looking woman, with the fire of what she believed to be a just indignation sparkling in her wide-open eyes.

The baron looked at her, and then into the troubled face of his son. It was full of entreaty and suffering, and he found it hard to restrain the sympathy it asked; but he knew that concessions affecting the happiness or misery of domestic life must not be lightly made.

“Suppose you marry Mistress Prideaux, what then, Nathaniel?”

“Is not Kelderby large enough to shelter my wife, Father?”

“Ask your mother, Nathaniel; she was not against the De Burgs coming to it, if their necessities had driven them so far. Also, I think surely that the girl you love is a good girl, and very fair, and like to have both hands full; for Mistress Mettelane is rich, and very loving to her niece.

“What is all this to you and me, Baron? If Mistress Prideaux got all that Mistress Mettelane and her generation are worth, I should like her none the better. And were Kelderby one hundred times as large, 't would be too small to shelter Mistress Prideaux and all her virtues. I am told 't is a point of good breeding to disguise handsomely, but I am no dissembler, and I have already told Nathaniel as much as I now repeat.”

“Then, Nathaniel,” said the baron, “there is no more to be said or done.”

“You are Baron of Kelderby, Father, and I am your heir.”

“Nathaniel, all the right I have in Kelderby I gave to Mistress Joan Singleton when she took me for her husband.” He stepped forward, lifted his wife's hand, and

touched the thread-like band of gold upon its third finger. "If your mother is willing to share her home with Mistress Prideaux, I am also most willing. If she is not, 't is indeed far beyond my inclination to make her less than Lady of Kelderby."

While he spoke he drew Lady Kelder within his embrace. Their white heads touched each other, and there was a momentary understanding swift as thought, penetrating as light. For love, purified by age, has a majestic tenderness and faithfulness, and Nathaniel in his own anxiety could not but respond to his father's loyalty and consideration.

But his heart was too full to speak. He stood for a moment before them with his head bared, and then hastily retraced the walk where the roses laughed and nodded in the sunshine, and made such riot of sweet scent that he ever afterward felt the smell of roses when trouble or disappointment was to face.

Roger had had no hesitation in allowing Nathaniel to make another effort to conquer his mother's prejudice, and he was not anxious as to the result. He *knew* that Olivia was going with him, having such knowledge by a source as much beyond explanation as it was beyond doubt. And as the days and weeks wore rapidly away — oh! so rapidly to Nathaniel — Olivia also became a sharer in her father's hopes and feelings; for no one can habitually breathe the atmosphere impregnated with a great enthusiasm and not catch fire from it. And persecution had turned Roger into an apostle. All the energy he had once thrown into the making of gold he now flung, with an almost fanatical abandon, into the cause of the persecuted Quakers. Fines, imprisonments, floggings, drove him not from the truth, but closer to it; and so strong were his appeals that Fox called him "a great hammer

on men's consciences." Even Cromwell had felt its weight, for Roger had not hesitated to remind him that "two thousand English men and women were in prison for Christ's sake; that their tears had been as water spilt upon a rock; and that by his indifference to their sufferings he had blown the fire of their persecution."

Olivia could not remain insensible to such zeal and fervour. Truly as she loved Nathaniel, she loved the fair ideals of spiritual life better. His eager, passionate, sorrowful wooing touched only the outer sanctuary of her life; for she had a soul that had never quite lost its memory of the skies, whose homing instinct was so strong that when the cares and loves of earthly life cast her out of hand for a few moments its flight was instantly heavenward.

Life at Mettelane farm was very pleasant to the girl, but there was ever before her inward sight a far grander scene: a new exodus; God's people coming out of their prison-houses by hundreds and thousands, and going with one heart to make homes in the untrodden forest. And in the green tabernacles of ancient trees she anticipated for herself communion with God in those hidden exaltations whose blessedness is rather surmised than conceived.

The "Good Intent," which was to carry Roger and his small colony, was to sail from Plymouth on the 5th of September, or earlier; and toward the close of August Olivia was in London with her father. She had left the green mountains of the North Country far behind, and was facing with a calm and steadfast soul the wide, separating ocean and the solitudes of the unknown world. Nathaniel was also in London; for, though his hopes were growing more impossible every hour, he had that desire which renders will indefatigable and love everlast-

ing, — which is the earnest of possession, the aerial road infallibly leading to its object. Duty might delay, years might sunder, but such love as his would not be prevented. In these hours of parting he foresaw the hour of meeting ; and in his heart, emptied of all present joy, hope found the more room for a vigorous and insistent growth.

Their last week in England was spent at the Blue Boar Inn ; a sad, thoughtful, anxious week, to which the events of the time lent a still more sombre colouring. The Protector's health was growing constantly worse, and the government rested upon it. Men stood talking in the streets, or in their shops, about subjects nothing related to their trades. The rumour of wars and changes tingled in every ear ; and London had that waiting aspect which touches communities as well as individuals. Strange portents and signs filled men's hearts with a fearful "looking forward ;" the great bells of churches had been tolled by invisible hands, and gliding ghosts from the waste dominions of the dead had been seen in the desolated galleries of Whitehall.

The night before they were to leave London for Plymouth, Olivia and Nathaniel were sitting at the open casement looking down into King Street. Roger was busy writing at a table in the middle of the low, darkish room. No one was speaking, for Nathaniel could not say what he wished to. He sat with wide, tearful eyes, holding Olivia's hand. Roger was also silent, but he was very restless, and gave Nathaniel the idea of a man watching for some one. Just at dark the door opened and George Fox entered.

He came in with a blessing on his lips, and laid a large folded parchment before Roger. The action had a movement of triumph in it, and Roger's face brightened as he took Fox's hand and said in a glad voice, —

“George, this is a great thing. I feared thou hadst failed, for the favour is a large one indeed.”

“And I think it is the last loving-kindness Oliver will ever show us. God remember him in all his afflictions !”

“Is he then so very ill?”

“He is nigh unto the grave. I went to Whitehall about thy matter ten days ago, and found John Owen there with Oliver, and we had some talk together of the Inward Light, which John Owen totally disallowed.”

“What said Cromwell?”

“He grieved me much, for he spoke not reverently, and sat upon the table swaying his booted legs, while he made jokes little like him, or like the matter in hand. ’Twas a mirth beside the real man, and I knew not what to think of it, and so came away greatly grieved.”

“I have heard that from childhood he hath been possessed at intervals by this mocking spirit, and that when it leaves him he is ever in the depths of despair and gloom.”

“Yesterday he sent for me, and he spoke like himself, and promised me the parchments this morning; and so to Hampton Court I went for them.”

“Well, then?”

“The Secretary Thurloe put them into my hand after some waiting; but as I stood in the path of the Park this afternoon I saw Oliver in his coach, a weary, sorrow-laden man indeed. And as I gazed I was awestruck, for I saw and felt a waft of death go forth against him, and when I came to him he looked like a dead man; and I cried out, ‘Farewell to thee, Oliver!’ and he stayed his coach and spoke to me of thy affairs, and said he would put in order the business relating to the Friends imprisoned for conscience’ sake; and so with a mournful

face he passed onward. But I judge him to be but a dead man."

"He hath had many warnings lately to put his house in order and render up his stewardship. The landlady of this inn hath a strange story of a man who met him near by; indeed 't was just here." And Roger led Fox to the window and pointed out a cobbler's shop. "Thee seest that dark door by the side of it. Oliver was coming down this street at the noon hour, and there was a great crowd, and he was locked in by it just at that door. And as he waited the door opened, and out of it came a man, gigantic in form, and covered with mail that shone so that no mortal eyes could look steadily at him. Only many saw a sword lifted up, which seemed to strike Cromwell, and heard a 'call,' an unfathomable voice far off, yet near, in some distant world, yet close at hand, cry, 'Hark, Cromwell! Cromwell, come hither; thou art wanted.' And those at hand heard Cromwell ask, 'Who art thou?' and after a short space he said, 'It is well;' and the crowd dispersed, and he went onward with a white, solemn face, and 't is said he spoke to none for two days afterward.

"I have heard often, George, that when Oliver was but a lad, a man of wondrous size and clad in shining mail parted the curtains of his bed at midnight and told him, not that he should be king, but that he should be the greatest man in England."

"Among the hosts of God in heaven Oliver has doubtless many kindred to his soul."

"And what then, George?"

"Such kindred are very close to us, and if we will listen they will speak."

Then Fox kissed and blessed Olivia, and turning to Roger, said in a cheerful voice, "We will part like men

who trust in God, Roger ; for we know in whom we have believed. And surely what the doleful Jeremiah said in the pit we can say in the sunshine : ‘There is none like unto Thee.’” And his clear voice had in it a contagious heat which made their hearts burn within them.

So Fox went away, but at the door he looked back, and his face was so luminous with hope and blessing that it left a sense of radiance where he had stood. Even when the door was shut, and the darkness had again covered the place, his bright, brave countenance seemed to have impressed so vivid a reflection on the atmosphere that Olivia’s soul thrilled to the picture of what it imaged. For miracles are within us, and not without.

The next day being Wednesday they went to Plymouth, where it was supposed they might have to wait until the following Monday. But on Thursday evening, just at sunset, Roger entered the room where Olivia and Nathaniel were sitting, and there was the light and strength of some new purpose on his face. He went straight to them, and taking Olivia’s hand, said,—

“The hour has come, my daughter. All is ready, and John Woodhouse waits for us with his hand upon the anchor.”

“Roger !”

“Father !”

“Even so, Nathaniel, and wisely so. Help Olivia with thy strength, and do not weaken her with thy sorrow.”

Then all stood up together. Olivia stretched out her hand for her hood and cloak, and Nathaniel silently brought them. He tied the little black hood under her chin, and clasped her cloak round her throat, and kissed

again and again the dear face, which in its sombre setting had a startling pallor and pain. Neither of them uttered a word. Pity and consolation were out of place in the presence of such sorrow; for had Nathaniel been dressing Olivia for her burial he could have been no more hopeless and heart-broken.

Roger walked before them through the narrow, busy streets of the town, carrying such light luggage as had not been put on the ship at London. Olivia and Nathaniel followed him. Sailors with their lasses on their arms were filling the evening air with rude laughter and ruder song; children were playing in the wider spaces; housewives stood in the doors of their houses gossiping with their neighbours; men sat smoking before the ale-houses, talking of the Protector's sickness, and the likelihood of another war. And no one gave more than a passing notice to the sorrowful couple going so swiftly and silently down to the Long Wall, at which the "Good Intent" lay waiting.

She was a Whitby boat, built for the Newfoundland fishing, and her captain, John Woodhouse, was one of Roger's converts. Her crew were all Quakers, and her passengers, five men and four women, were exiles for the same faith. John Woodhouse looked at Nathaniel with a slight astonishment, and when he found he did not intend to share their voyage he told him very plainly that wind and tide waited for no man; "and both are now for us, young sir; and so if thou wilt step on land quickly we will lift our anchor, and away westward in God's name."

It was well that all had been said many times over that could be said. There was now neither space nor solitude for private sorrows. Nathaniel wrung Roger's hands, and then looked at Olivia. She cast down her

eyes and shook her head pitifully ; and then, forgetting all the world but Nathaniel, she clasped her arms around his neck and laid her lips against his. They could not even say each other's name. Feeling had lost language, and their dumb grief tore and lacerated their hearts, seeking for some audible expression. For one supreme moment they suffered as spirits suffer ; then Olivia's clasp loosened, her hands dropped downward ; with a great sob she turned to her father, and fell faint and trembling on his breast.

The old man was weeping for her. He positively, though gently, motioned Nathaniel away ; and John Woodhouse, taking his arm, led him to the narrow plank which he was waiting to withdraw. Thus, blind and dumb and dazed with anguish, he stumbled to the seawall, and leaning upon it, watched the lifting of the anchor and the sailing of the " Good Intent." The wind filled the canvas as soon as it was spread, and Olivia came to the stern of the vessel and stretched out her arms to Nathaniel in a last farewell. They had loosened her hood while she was struggling with unconsciousness, and she held it in her hand. Her face was yet clear to him ; he thought she smiled ; he felt something, he knew not what, of hope and promise in her attitude ; and he stood, bareheaded, watching, watching, watching, until the gray figure, in the gray evening, was no longer distinguishable. Then over the shaded ocean rushed the night, and the white wings of the ship carried her into the profundities and mysteries of the sky line. The tide was going out like a mill-race, the wind rising rapidly ; in ten minutes the " Good Intent " was out of sight, — and where was the land ?

But great sorrows have the privilege of their greatness, and Nathaniel, alone in his room with his sorrow, learned

the marvellous prayer of the breaking heart, — that cry which brings the Comforter out from his sanctuary. He received that gift of tears which consoles the burning drought of the wounded soul with its blessed rain.

He did not return at once to Kelderby. The great Protector lay dying, and he could not bear to desert London in the solemn watch the weeping, fearful city was keeping. And suddenly there began to blow such a hurricane as England never witnessed, either before or since. Throughout the length and breadth of the land, seas and skies were in an inconceivable anarchy and tumult. Furious winds tore up forests by the roots, and unroofed and destroyed multitudes of homes. In the north it had a demoniac fury; and Kelderby, upon its rocky eyry, was smitten on every side. But Kelderby was well builded, and it took the blows without wincing. Lady Kelder, silent and awestruck, wandered from room to room with the prayer of supplication on her lips. The baron, watching the dreadful majesty of the billowy clouds, felt in his inmost soul a hope that it was the storm heralding the ineffable peace of the millennium. In speechless reverence he waited for the dawning. Surely it would bring the shining of His face!

At Chenage the storm broke with terrific destruction. The farm offices were mostly levelled within the first hour, and the ancient trees lay piled like barriers around the house. Anastasia had arrived in the oppressive heat and gloom of the previous day. She was not usually affected by atmospheric influences; but the weight and darkness, the electric tension, the awful stillness, the wan glare on the horizon, and the boding colour and dreadful look at the zenith, made her restless and fearful. It was impossible to escape the warning written in the air and on the sky; and she wandered from window to

window watching the paths which led from the sea to the grange.

Just as the tempest blotted out with passionate fury the space between earth and sky, she saw a man racing through the driving rain and gathering winds. She had the gates flung wide, and she stood trembling within the shaky shelter of the house until he pushed the door open and took her hands.

“Oh, John, John!” She said the words in her heart, and John read them in her eyes. But to the servants she cried with a sharp imperativeness, —

“The best room for Captain Latour; and clothes from the awmrie in the oak chamber; and see that supper is on the table in fifteen minutes.”

Little she cared now for the roaring wind and the rain lashing the house like whip-thongs. John was safe. As the steward uncorked the Burgundy, and the cook brought in the chief dish, John entered the room. He had on one of Chenage’s finest velvet suits, and he directed Anastasia’s eyes to it by his look, by his walk, by the air of satisfaction and amusement with which he stroked the velvet sleeve and twirled the ribbon at his wrist.

“It becomes me well enough,” he said, looking steadily into her eyes.

“I thank my stars you are in it, and not — the other. How he used to strut when he put it on! I fall a-laughing when I think on it. Eat and drink, John. Faith, this house is yours, and all that is therein.”

“A nice lonely place it is. You could play the devil here, Asia, and neither man nor devil find you out.”

“At this present, I assure you, every servant is at my disposal; and I have been so wise as to quarrel with all my acquaintances. Remember you are Captain Latour,

on his Majesty's business, — God bless the king! His name covers many affairs he knows nothing of. Lord, but the wind blows! I vow, I am afraid of it. Hark, how the trees are crashing! 'T will be a miracle if the house endures. John, I am frightened."

"No wonder. I never heard a more devilish pother. I wish I was in mid-ocean all trig and tight. Then I would enjoy such a passion of wind. I would be lashed to the wheel, and buffet the bully. Lord, Asia! I have been out in winds that you could lean against, as if they were a wall. I have heard them shriek curses into my ears, and given them a full tale back again. I would rather fight a mad wind than a Spanish slaver; I swear I would!"

He was looking at Anastasia with a kindling face as he spoke, taking in with a sense of satisfaction the beauty of her person, the elegance of her dress, the pallor of her face; for he liked to feel that she feared where he exulted. The sense of superiority was necessary to the development of John de Burg's amiability.

"There's a shriek, Asia; a shriek from some poor devil on that bare, blasted moor outside."

"It is inside; the woman I told you about, — Audrey."

"Is she really mad? or even mad nor'-nor'-west?"

"Mad at all points, and however the wind blow. I wanted something to do this afternoon, and I went to her and helped her to reckon over her sins. Mad! She spit at me like a she-devil. Mad, of course! No woman in her senses would have found out the truth, but Audrey told me the all of it this afternoon."

"Then she is dangerously mad?"

"Ay, extremely so."

She looked inquisitively at John. She was anxious to know several things he could tell her, but she was aware

that John would speak only in his own way and at his own time. Besides, the servants were passing in and out, and their conversation was necessarily broken and mingled with many formalities and political allusions.

As dinner progressed the storm increased until conversation became difficult. John bent over the hearth, and smoked in silence. Anastasia watched him from the couch on which she lay. She was white and trembling with fear and anxiety. She was cold also, for the rain, pouring down the wide chimney, had put out the fire.

"Better so," muttered John. "This wind would blow the fire over the room. We are not ready to burn the house yet. I am just planning for many a jolly day in it. I told him I was coming here. I told him I was coming to drink his wines, and wear his clothes, and collect his rents. He did not like it. He went into a damnable passion; he ought to have known better by this time."

"Then he still lives? Oh, John, John!"

"He lives for me, not for you."

"I want to be free! I want to be free! When will you set me free?"

"When does Roger Prideaux sail?"

"He has already sailed."

"That angel Olivia, — is she with him?"

"Yes."

"Are you sure?"

"Never trust me if I tell you not the truth."

"The name of the ship?"

"The 'Good Intent.'"

"Very good. 'T is contrary to my humour, but you shall be free ere I take the 'Good Intent.' Roger Chenage must not be on the same ship as Roger Prideaux. If you want to marry Southport, put him off for six weeks, and

then make yourself Countess Anastasia. It will be a legal marriage by that time."

"What will you do with Prideaux?"

"Concern not yourself with the matter. Have you found out what money he will have with him?"

"The price of Sandys, at least. Seven other Quakers go with them. All have money; three of them have wives."

"Faith, I have no objection to either the money or the women."

"As to Saint Olivia, John?"

"I shall marry her."

"John!"

"With your gracious leave."

She laughed with a mirthful wickedness. "It pleases me mightily. When the bride is won, send me the news and a garland."

The last words were hardly distinguishable in the terrific roaring of the wind. It was the reasonable wind gone mad, and howling in its lunacy with all the myriad shrieks it knew. John lifted his head to listen. Anastasia drew her mantle close around her throat and cowered among the pillows of the sofa. Suddenly there was a cry more awful than that of any wailing or shouting of the wind, — a cry of despairing humanity for salvation; and ere it died away it was lost in the crash of falling masonry.

Anastasia leaped to her feet. A mortal terror was in her face, though her tongue refused to speak. The next moment the servants rushed into the room, and John faced them with an angry calmness.

"What a parcel of craven rogues you be! Do you think the Devil has come for you? Get me a lantern."

"Mistress, 't is the west wall and chimney — the poor

mad woman! 'T was her death cry. Indeed it was!" The speaker was the house-steward Jervis, and John answered him sternly, —

"Then get a lantern, and go with me to find her."

"Captain, I dare not go out this night. Ten thousand devils are abroad. I will die under cover."

"You are a fool! Bring me a light."

His face was lowering and scornful, and it terrified the trembling servants more than the storm did. They went back to the kitchen like animals whipped past some terrifying object. In a few minutes Jervis returned with the lantern, and sobbing with terror; yet not daring to refuse the imperious motion of John's hand, he was forced to accompany him to the scene of the disaster.

Anastasia stood by her sofa, resting one hand upon it, and listening intently. If it was the west wall, where was Audrey? She had been chained to it. Had she gone down with it? If so, she was doubtless killed. The thought was a relief. Revenge is sweet only in its first moments, and there is no escaping its consequences. Audrey had become an anxiety. She dared not free the woman. She would talk. She would rouse suspicions. She would invent accusations. In short, she might make unknown trouble. She had wished Audrey dead very often; what if the storm had really killed her? She asked herself the question with a good deal of honesty.

"I shall be hugely obliged to it," she answered the spirit within her; and while she was musing on the probability, John returned to the room. Something in his face satisfied her before he spoke.

"The west wall has indeed fallen, Mistress Chenage, and also the chimney built against it. Jervis tells me that a poor servant who was mad must have gone with it."

"Poor Audrey! Have you not tried to reach her?"

"'T is impossible, Mistress! Nothing could live a moment in this storm. Audrey is dead, and 't is a mercy to her. Mistress, she was mad as a March hare."

"Find out whether she is certainly dead. Take your fellows, and make it certain."

"God's pardon for all, Mistress. It would be self-murder. We should be mad as the mad woman to try it."

"You are a cruel lot of varlets. Go and drink some more beer, and try not to die of fright ere the daylight come."

She spoke with a withering scorn, and the man slunk out of her presence. Anger, shame, and a certain feeling of injustice blended with his terror, but he was too slavish to analyze his feelings; he preferred to do as his mistress had divined he would do, — bury them in a beer jack.

When they were alone, Anastasia turned quickly to her brother. "Are we in any danger?"

"Seriously, none at all. The west rooms are evidently a later addition. This portion of the house is as solid as the hills around it. I'll wager my ship that old beldam is out of life."

"I am glad on it."

"Take some wine. To say truth, you are liker a ghost than I care to see." He himself then drank a goblet of Burgundy, and wrapping his cloak around him, he sat down by his sister's side.

"Asia, as soon as daylight breaks I shall go. I like not the land. There are a thousand dangers on it that never put out to sea. Anon will come the coroner, and men and women with him, and I will stand question from no man."

"John, take this from me. In a little while you shall fear a question from no man. Old Noll lay dying when I left London. I have been twice to Paris this year, and

I tell you very frankly the king is most entirely my servant. At my next going I will bring back with me a full reversal of all acts against you."

"Faith, I think what I have done against Noll's government may balance what injury Carolus Rex had to complain of."

"I 'll swear it, twenty times over. And you shall have a captaincy in the navy, if you lean that way."

"Not I. I 'll take a license as a privateer, and give you a thousand pounds for it. Asia, get me all you say, and it is two thousand pounds for it."

"And then, John, you can come when and how you like to see me, and what else you desire."

"I can pay a few debts I owe. I can fight to better purpose when I fight openly. I can even follow Nutt's example, and play the devil at sea, and build me a fine house on shore, and go to church, and wear white linen."

"And marry a saint."

He laughed, but there was a tone in the laugh Anastasia did not like. Was it possible that her brother was really in love with the Quaker girl? How she hated her! Then she let her thoughts wander into all sorts of unholy suppositions, — the probable fate of Olivia, her own certain release from Audrey, her contemplated traffic with the king; and as she mused she regained her usual bold reliance upon herself and her fortune.

John was employed in much the same manner. Folded in his cloak, he walked slowly up and down the room, stopping frequently at the table to fill his glass with the rich red wine and silently drink it. And still the wind shrieked, and the rain beat the house on every side; and still on the mad gusts were brought the despairing cries of dogs and horses only partly sheltered, and now and then the sound of crashing timber.

Hour after hour wore away in such desultory conversation and thoughtful pauses. The room grew very cold as the night wore on, and the guttering candles made only a fitful light. Toward the morning John said, —

“The wind will go seaward with the out-going tide. You may sleep now. In an hour or two I shall make for the coast. My ship is in a land-locked harbour, but she must have suffered. When do you go to London?”

“As soon as may be. ’T is a time when moments may change lives, and my father will be most impatient at my absence.”

“How fares De Burg?”

“Well. He hath lacked nothing in the Tower but freedom; and I trow he thinks as he will, though he cannot do as he will.”

“How takes he your widowhood?”

“With a great contentment. The thought of Appleby puts him ever in a fury of hatred, and I think he would certainly forgive you all, if he but knew all.”

“I want not his forgiveness. Speak nothing of me.”

She was standing with her face raised to his. All men must have something to love, and John had no kindred but his sister. He drew her to his breast and kissed her with a great affection. He thanked her for all that she had done, and all she intended to do; he assured her of her real freedom, and bade her farewell with a genuine emotion. When she left the room he followed her into the hall, and watched her pretty figure slowly climbing the steep stair in the wavering feeble light of the shaded candle which she carried. Her long robe of velvet trailed far behind; her dark cloak was drawn close round her throat. And when he called again, “Farewell, Asia!” she turned and faced him, and her face shone clear and fair, and she kissed her white hand to him as

he stood in the gloom below. Then he went back into the room with a sob in his throat and a warmth at his heart which made him straighten himself and ask hopefully, —

“Well, then, what next?”

He drew his brows together and set himself intently to think out his course. He expected his own ship to be more or less injured by the wind, but the “Good Intent” was only a merchant vessel, and all merchant vessels were slow and heavy in comparison with his own; for in her everything had been sacrificed to speed. Even though he had been delayed beyond his intention, he was certain of overtaking his prize. He had the whole Atlantic before him. He did not intend to molest the “Good Intent” until she was near the American coast. In his mind’s eye he saw the precise locality in which the meeting would suit him best, and he resolved to steer directly for it.

At dawn the wind had lulled considerably, but the day was stormy enough, and his own horse had been injured during the night. He had the best the stable afforded, and in the first shivering daylight he passed beyond the gates of Chenage. “The king’s business is urgent,” he said, as he gave the hostler his fee; and he was conscious of a great relief when the iron gates clashed behind him.

“’T is a cursed hole to stay in,” he muttered; “and I wish to the Devil Asia were out of it.”

But Asia did not find it prudent for some days to show hurry in the matter. Audrey’s death caused some unpleasant talk. It was remembered that Mistress Chenage had said *all* the servants had been discharged, and people were curious enough to wonder why nothing had been said of Audrey’s lunacy. However, Anastasia told her story well at the inquest, and her servants confirmed

all she chose to say. The country was tossed upside down with the storm, and men's hearts were trembling in that sough of evil rumour which affirmed more positively every hour that the great Protector was dead.

Three days after this event was certain, she found it convenient and possible to return to London with all speed. At the small village of Hayburn, about twenty miles south of Kelderby, she stopped to bait her horses. As she sat at the open window of the inn a young man rode up to the door. It was Nathaniel Kelder. She watched him dismount, and as he stamped his numb feet upon the flags of the court she told herself that he was by all odds the handsomest lover she had ever had. She could not resist the passionate desire she felt to speak to him, though his face was full of sorrow and thought, and his manner grave and preoccupied.

A sudden plan came into her mind, and without a moment's hesitation she called him, Her voice was low and full of remorseful inflections. Nathaniel approached the window, and this time he removed his hat for a moment as he stood before her.

"Nathaniel, I am a very unhappy woman. I have done wrong, but 't was out of my love for you, and I pray you forgive me!"

He looked at the penitent doubtfully. Her eyes were downcast, tears were slowly overflowing them; her whole aspect was mournful and humble. She put out her hand timidly, and then, sighing, slowly withdrew it. Her experiences at Chenage had worried and wearied her; she had not dressed herself for conquest; on the whole, she had the appearance of veritable contrition.

"I am so sorry, Nathaniel. To say truth, I am heart-broken. Forgive me! I make it a case of conscience to you."

There was a slight hesitation in Nathaniel's manner, but after it he spoke with a singular gentleness, —

“I am glad, my cousin, to hear your speech. God pardon you, as I do also. And indeed I am most sure that even those whom you have injured will be very forgiving to you ; Olivia — ”

“I ask not her pardon, sir ; yours, and yours only. Nathaniel, 't was my love for you that led me so far.”

“Mistress Chenage, it becomes not you to speak such words, nor yet me to listen to them. I pray you excuse me.”

“You shall hear me, Nathaniel.”

“I crave your pardon, Mistress.”

“Call me ‘Asia.’”

“The time for that has passed away. You are the wife, or the widow, of another man. I am the promised husband of another woman.”

“Of Olivia Prideaux ? ”

He bowed, and a bright flush overspread his face. For a moment his whole appearance changed.

“Do you think I discovered my faults to you for this piece of news? Let me tell you soberly I am sorry for nothing that I have done. I shall make haste to do still more evil to that — woman ! that preaching woman ! I will have her ruined. I will have her killed. Do you hear, sir? You are the most ill-bred man in England. You are — ” she suddenly ceased. Nathaniel had passed out of her sight, out of the sound of her railing. What had she done? Humbled herself for nought. “Oh, oh, oh !” She stamped her foot, and struck her hands together, and bit her fingers in her chagrin and anger.

On Nathaniel the encounter made a most unpleasant impression. But there was one comfort, — he was near home ; and never had the thought of his father's

counsel and his mother's love been more welcome. It was yet afternoon when he arrived there. His first glance at the old house was full of fear, but he smiled at the fear the next moment. The storm had not injured a flag of it, yet the number of ancient trees lying prostrate told him something of its severity. There was so much to tell that, as he sat and talked, the daylight waned, and Jael brought in the lights and the last meal. And she looked at the three serious faces on the hearth and wondered what new sorrow Nathaniel had brought back with him.

"Go from home he will," she said fretfully to herself; "and God knows them that wander get many a gliff of sorrow. But Nathaniel Kelder must outside, and no wall high enough to hinder."

His sad face made her "fit to cry;" and Lady Kelder took advantage of the comfortable sympathy to let a few drops down fall over her perplexities and anticipations. She was sitting before the fire in her own room, and Jael was slowly combing and brushing her long white hair.

"Cromwell dead! And only God Almighty knows what is to come after, Jael."

"He went his way in a great storm, my Lady. 'T is said the Devil raised it, disputing about his soul; a mighty whaff-whaft, truly."

"Wherein was his soul so special, Jael? If the Devil took his own in tempests, God knows there would be neither seed-time nor harvest for good men. The storm broke three days before Cromwell's death, and he went away in the afternoon sunshine; and moreover, a great rainbow spanned Whitehall while he lay a-dying. My son Nathaniel, who saw it, surely ought to know."

"Well, my Lady, I stand in hand to side with you always. But Joe Milman, he says Minister Duttred made

a great matter of the storm. He told how the Devil disputed with angels about the body of Moses, and, said he, more likely about the soul of Cromwell; for at a good man's death-bed Satan must roar, or forever hold his peace. And roar he did, my Lady, both on sea and land."

"And yet for all he roared to a cross purpose, Jael. Cromwell cared not for the storm, but lay in peace all through it. Faith, we are more out of pocket than Cromwell was out of heart. Twenty cottages unroofed in the upper village, and in lower Kelderby the sea in possession total. If 't was indeed the Devil's doing, why did he not unroof Whitehall? A sore miss, Jael. He came not nigh his dying-bed; 't was too well guarded. Little wit has the great Devil. Had he put Elizabeth Cromwell in a fretful, fearful temper at her husband's bedside, she would have done his spiteful errand for him."

"Well, my Lady, I pray he give not us some shrewd parting blow at the last hour."

"Never fear him. If our souls are in God's keeping, God must be wounded ere we can be prejudiced. 'T is not death, but life, that is the hard battle. If Richard Cromwell keep not hold of the sceptre, — and Richard Cromwell is a simpleton, — then Kelderby stands in the wind of Charles Stuart's say-so. And what is to become of us? We cannot beg; the baron is too old to work."

"Be as brave for life as for death, my Lady! The God that feeds the ravens will not starve the Kelders. And Master Nathaniel —"

"Master Nathaniel is wholly and most perversely taken up with that Quaker girl. I thank God she is now far on the Atlantic Ocean."

"My Lady, if Master Nathaniel would but stay quiet

in Kelderby ! It takes a long time for trouble to find a man out in his own home. On the king's highway any turn may bring them together."

"You speak truth, Jael. Had he been at Kelderby, he had not met Mistress Chenage to-day, and then no bad words had been between them. If Charles Stuart comes back, she moves him at her pleasure, — so 't is freely said. An ill woman to quarrel with."

"An ill woman to be friends with ; say that, my Lady. And as for holding Kelderby at any one's pleasure, I trust you know better than that. There is One that orders both kings and women. I would n't be put about for nothing. And it is ill luck to speak of ill. My mother used to say to me, 'Jael, my lass, say no ill of the year till the year be past.'"

"Well, well ! Put down the blind, Jael, and let me sleep, and so forget for a little that I live. Surely we shut our bedroom door and rehearse death every night."

"I know not, my Lady. Sleep has its own life. Will dead folks dream?"

She was pulling down the blind as she spoke, and she paused in the act, and looking upward said softly, "There's a fine new moon, God bless her !"

XVIII.

JOHN DE BURG'S FAILURE.

“Do darkness and terror plot against you?

We also plan.

They that love you are stronger than your haters;

Trust God, O man ! ”

“He kept him as the apple of his eye.”

“Deep calleth unto deep.”

EVEN in Cromwell's time the Quakers were remarkable for their commercial integrity and prosperity. They succeeded in business just as the Puritans succeeded in war. Carnal traders were as inferior to them as Rupert's dragoons were to Cromwell's Ironsides. For it is the natural consequence of a life divided sharply into two halves, spiritual and secular, to incline those who so divide it to a methodical strictness in the inferior sphere. Commercial energy and rectitude is the earthly expression of spiritual energy and sincerity; opposite sides of the wheel, truly, but having a point of union in the centre.

Roger Prideaux's heart was burning with love to God and sympathy for God's oppressed children; and from this very intensity of spiritual regard sprang a solicitude and care as to their earthly welfare which was almost minute in character. The ship, the captain, the crew, the provisions, every item concerning the proposed exile, was settled with all the prudence and consideration of one

who believed the steps of a good man to be "ordered," and who desired to second and follow that ordering.

God works *in* man but not *instead* of him, he said; and he had waited for the promptings of this Divine Guide, listening for direct mandates, doing nothing till "led," walking only as the way opened. His first intentions had been toward Boston, but he had seen, in a vision of fire, "the intolerant city," and heard a voice say, "Go to the southward;" and immediately, being thus warned, he had turned his thoughts to the Dutch plantation of New Amsterdam.

As far as possible all human precautions for safety had been taken. The paper which Fox had brought from Cromwell was a safe warrant to pass through the New England settlements and buy land and reside thereon, and his former business relationships had enabled him to send the main portion of the moneys belonging to himself and his friends, through letters of credit, to the governor of New Amsterdam. The western sea was infested with pirates, and with privateers little better than pirates; and he thought it well to pass through it in a condition of poverty which offered nothing to provoke their cupidity or their cruelty.

They left London on the last day of August,—a company of five men and four women; the latter being Olivia Prideaux, Mary Woodhouse, the wife of the captain, and Anna Copeland, who was going on a mission as the Lord should direct her. The "Good Intent" was a stanch ship, manned by godly men, and she went gallantly out with a fair wind blowing.

For many weeks the voyage was an exceptionally pleasant one. Several of the party had just been released from dark and noisome prisons; their wrists and ankles still kept the mark of the irons, and on their

bodies were the cruel tokens of the scourge. The boundless freedom, the fresh winds, the peace, the safety, the rapture of their private communion, the refreshment of their mutual worship, set every heart to a song of joy and praise ; and the words of their salutation were, " It is good to be here."

Only Olivia had an occasional air of sadness. She could not forget her last parting with her lover. The noble restraint of his grief ; his hopeful words ; the tears that blinded his last gaze into her face ; the sad smiles with which he brightened their last words ; the lingering clasp of his hands ; his tall, mournful figure turning so reluctantly away, — all these appeals to her memory recalled a thousand other incidents still more tender.

She was very quiet, and she sat much alone. She had moments of repining at her lot, and then hours of bitter sorrow for them. She was fighting a harder battle than any of the martyrs around her had fought, for it is easier to endure than it is to resign. She believed that God had said to her, " Give me thy heart ; put out of it all lesser loves ;" and she was trying to obey him.

" Trust in God. He is but proving thee. At the last he will give thee the desire of thy heart." Such comfort her father offered her, but she could not take it. Olivia's aspiration of a divine obedience touched a higher key ; she would not render God a resignation which was grounded upon a hope of future self-happiness. She sought after that self-abnegation which finds in the act of utter surrender its highest joy.

And when the soul is forced solely in one direction, it gains new powers in that direction. Dead to earth, earth vanishes to it, and heaven is really begun. These days of calm summer sailing upon sunny seas were days of inward struggle, of spiritual defeats and victories, to

Olivia. There was no wonder that she was silent, and that her soul in the neighbourhood of eternities had a seriousness beyond the issues of time.

One day, after a week of exquisite weather, the little congregation on the "Good Intent" met on deck in the midst of a hot, languorous haze. The clouds hung low and gray. The ocean's leaden colour was broken only by those long lines of pale light often seen at sea before an electric storm. The gloom of thunder was in the air. For two days a ship had been in their wake. It still hovered on the horizon, looking, through the hazy light, like a gigantic phantom in its winding-sheet. The infinite solitude of the colourless waste, the silence, the heavy depressing atmosphere, affected the most cheerful of the party. There was a dead calm. Every one was sensible of the warning written in the air, and on the seething sea, and on the brooding sky.

The captain stood by the wheel, his large blue eyes gazing steadily into the horizon. All at once, as if by magic, the wind rose, and the ship in their wake was plainly seen to be bearing down on the "Good Intent."

"She is a slaver or a pirate," said the captain; "the kind are familiarly known to me. As matters now stand it is like to be a fight or a ransom."

"Thou knowest well we cannot fight, John Woodhouse."

"It seemeth just and reasonable, Roger, to defend the ship; not a year ago I did it, and saved many lives."

"Different now, John. Thou hast learned a higher lesson. Canst thou overcome evil with evil?"

"I have sailed my ship for fifteen years;" and he gazed sadly upward to her tapering spars.

"John, when Christ disarmed Peter, he disarmed every one calling themselves Christians. Wilt thou take a

sword in thy hand when thou art forbidden even to go to law?"

About three in the afternoon the ships were within speaking distance, and Olivia standing by her father's side watched the movements of the men on deck.

"There is John de Burg," she said in a low voice. "It must be his ship, Father. Do not leave me;" and she slipped her hand into his. "Whatever happens, — life or death, — do not leave me. There are worse things come to women than death."

The ships were now close together, and a rattling shot suddenly fired across the bows of the "Good Intent" was a command Captain Woodhouse could not mistake. He stood midship, a big upright figure in the precise plain coat and tall hat of his day, and he answered the shot by a sharp call, —

"What dost thou want?"

"Alongside."

The answer was returned with a curt authority that demanded either a prompt obedience or a prompt resistance; and obedience of this kind was a new lesson to John Woodhouse. He made so little haste that the order was repeated with blasphemous force.

"Thou must submit to circumstances, John. Fear not. God will direct them."

But John looked at Roger with a resentful acquiescence. He longed for the arms he had not brought with him. In a few minutes the "Good Intent" lay alongside, and the grappling-irons secured her unwilling company. As the two vessels came together with a slight shock John de Burg and his lieutenant Pastro leaped upon the deck of the "Good Intent." John was dressed with a brutal carelessness, — his legs naked to the knees, the sleeves of his waistcoat turned up to his shoulders,

and his red, hairy chest showing behind his open shirt. Upon his head he wore a Turkish fez, — a covering familiar enough now, but at that day associated with outrage and piracy and all the crimes of heathendom.

In the act of leaping he saw Olivia, and with an insolent politeness he lifted his scarlet cap and vowed she was handsomer than ever, and that he was vastly glad to see her. And as he spoke his fierce black eyes were roving over the ship, though he was uncomfortably conscious of the resolute look with which Roger Prideaux was regarding him.

“I am truly sorry to meet thee again in such ill fashion, De Burg. I thought better of thee at Sandys.”

He did not answer Roger, but, calling the captain, in an imperative voice demanded of him, —

“What ransom will you pay for yourself and your ship?”

“I will ransom my whole company, or I will share their fate.”

“Mistress Prideaux is beyond ransom. I have not followed her over the Atlantic to sell her. She will give me her hand, and so save the life of her father.”

“Roger Prideaux will hold his life at no such shameful price.”

“Roger Prideaux cannot help himself.”

Then Olivia looked at him steadily. “John de Burg,” she said, “once, for God’s sake, we saved thy life. If thou hast forgotten the grace, God will remember.”

“Ah, my sweet beauty, have you yet to learn how far off God Almighty takes himself when he is wanted?”

“He is a very present help.”

“He will need to be, I assure you!”

He spoke passionately, and as he did so turned to Captain Woodhouse. “Ransom your ship at four thousand pounds, or she goes to the bottom.”

"I have not four thousand pence."

"What moneys have your passengers?"

"About one hundred pounds."

"Damnation! Will one hundred pounds pay me? I trow not. I will sell all of you to the Norfolk plantation. You are felons, thieves, and the like; fit for nothing but to be flogged through the tobacco field."

"We are honest, God-fearing men; exiles for faith and conscience."

"Faith and conscience! You are a pack of rogues and scoundrels, and you shall be sold as such. Let me look at the women: reasonably pretty, eh, Pastro? We can give them a free passage, I think."

"My captain is too good to them."

Then De Burg turned to Prideaux. "Friend Roger, I hear you have the price of Sandys with you. I want it."

"I have not a penny of it by me."

"What have you done with it?"

"It is beyond thy touch."

"Have you sent it by letter?"

"Yea, by letter."

"Answer me to the purpose. For every answer that is aside from it I will fling one of your number into the sea. Pastro, the captain will go first."

Then John Woodhouse said in a clear, brave voice, "Roger, answer nothing that seems wrong to thee. I fear neither death nor what comes after death."

"To whom did you send the money?"

"To Peter Stuyvesant, Governor of New Amsterdam."

"How much?"

"Six thousand pounds of my own money."

"How much that is not your own?"

"I cannot tell thee that."

He made a movement of his head, and Roger saw that John Woodhouse was in danger.

“Stay!” he cried. “There are five thousand pounds belonging to those with me.”

“Eleven thousand pounds in all. You shall give me your evidence, and you shall write a letter authorizing me to collect this money.”

“I will not do so wickedly. What say you, Friends? Will you give your money to serve the Devil with, and also your bodies into slavery?”

There was a momentary inquisition, and Roger saw his answer in every face.

“I will give thee no such authority.”

“Then I will hang you at the yard-arm; and I will make of your daughter a thing too vile for life.”

Roger turned to his daughter. Her face was lifted above its natural poise, and her tall, slight figure had a superlative dignity as she answered his look of questioning anguish: “Father, thou must do right. There is none that can make me vile.”

“I will give you three minutes to decide.”

During this conversation an ominous silence and gloom had been gradually gathering. The wind had fallen as suddenly as it had risen. A fierce, breathless heat brooded over the dark sea. The black clouds were like a roof of hot iron above them. The company of the “Good Intent” stood each a little apart. In that supreme moment there was only One to whom they could appeal. Olivia was at her father’s side; she was holding his hand, but that was only a symbol. Through the darkness and terror she was feeling for the hands upon the palms of which her name was graven, — the Almighty hands, which could bring salvation.

De Burg walked from the mainmast to the capstan,

where he stood insolently, with his foot against the anchor chain. And in that interval Olivia's soul had traversed the sidereal spaces, and in a momentary calenture of faith and love refuged herself and her companions in the care of the Omnipotent.

Neither had the men Friends been indifferent to their position. A glance full of intelligence, passing like a flash from face to face, informed each soul with the same purpose. They had no weapons, they would not fight; but in the arms of every father and husband who stood there was the glow of a strength which would not suffer a finger to be laid upon their dear ones. They were ready at a word, a movement, to stand as a living wall before them; quite ready and willing to put both De Burg and Pastro back upon the deck of their own ship.

The moments so pregnant with emotion and decision to the human element were also moments of preponderating gravity for the position of the two ships. The storm was gathering with such rapidity that De Burg waited not his own span of delay. He looked imperatively at Roger, and cried, "Go quickly! Write me the order on Peter Stuyvesant."

"I will not."

"A rope and a noose, Pastro. As for you, my beauty —"

"You shall not touch me. God is between us."

"Faith! he must step aside, then."

He stretched out his arms as if to embrace her; his fierce eyes were fixed greedily upon her person; but at the same moment a flash of vivid lightning tore apart the black, low-hanging clouds, and as De Burg essayed to move he fell like one dead.

Then Pastro sprung to his side, and with a great cry lifted the limp, nerveless body, and leaped with it into

De Burg's own ship. Fortunately, the movement was an incredibly swift one; for as he did so the sea rose, not in waves, but as if lifted bodily upward in one black, tremendous, heaving mass. The grappling-irons parted like straws. The ships were driven far asunder. Then the wind began to blow as if by signal. In a moment it was a hurricane, and the lightning flash which had smitten De Burg was but the prelude of a storm that tore the heavens with an incessant fire; while the thunder, and the roar of the wind, and the mighty sighing of the great surges, made a noise that beat with deafening reverberations.

But amid all the clamour of the elements there was peace in the little cabin of the "Good Intent." And when the storm was over, there was not a sign of their enemy. The next morning they were under blue skies, a soft wind was blowing, and the sharp savour of salt in the air was blended with sweet scents from the nearing land. That day a bird rested upon their rigging, and told them in a sylvan song that he was scarce a day's flight out of the woods. And so it proved; for within thirty hours they touched Long Island, and found a shady creek, into which they entered with great joy.

The following day Roger, accompanied by John Woodhouse, went over to New Amsterdam to see the governor. They found him walking in the garden of his handsome house at the Whitehall, and easily arranged with him the business relating to the transfer of the moneys in his charge. He had no suspicion that his visitors were Quakers. Their dress was not in that day remarkable; and the use of "thee" and "thou" was familiar to all Dutchmen, who thought in Dutch and translated their thoughts into English.

But as soon as Roger began to speak of buying land

and forming a settlement of refuge for the persecuted people of God, Stuyvesant answered him angrily. He was then in dispute with the New England colonies on a question of boundary, and anxious to avoid an appeal to arms; and Captain Willett, a persecuting magistrate of Plymouth, was at that very time in New Amsterdam regarding the matter. Now, Captain Willett had one idea in his diplomatic mission, — the conversion of Stuyvesant to the cruel policy of Massachusetts with regard to the Quakers.

This policy was in direct contravention to the express orders of the colonial proprietaries and the universal feeling of the people; nor were injustice and intolerance personally besetting sins of the clever, mercenary Hollander. He had been nursed and reared in the land of religious liberty; and in his heart he was angry at the necessity for conciliating Captain Willett, and at the Quakers for being the occasion of a violation of his principles. For if a man have a conscience, he hates not only the sin he commits, but also they by whom the offence comes; and Stuyvesant, forced by political considerations into the position of a persecutor, had ended by hating the Quakers as the cause of his own injustice.

He turned with a dark face to Captain Woodhouse and said, "You have brought here a ship; that is your affair. By bringing Quakers in it you have made the ship and all the merchandise in it forfeit; that is my affair."

"Is that the law of New Amsterdam? We knew it not."

"To be ignorant of law is not to be innocent. Make short work of your departure. There are twelve hours given you for it. As for thee, Master Prideaux, mind thy own business, and meddle not with our religion.

Remonstrants are usually atheists. A man should be satisfied with the religion of his country ; when he travels about for religion, he is a discontented man, who has perhaps a bad conscience. Take a glass of anise-water and be gone ; you have affairs that will be better for expedition."

So the men returned to the ship too much disappointed to admire as they might have done the good brick houses, the well-paved streets, and the air of prosperity and happiness pervading the pleasant new city. On reaching the "Good Intent," they found there several visitors, — Friends, who had come to give them welcome. They were chiefly inhabitants of Flushing, and all during the past year had suffered by fines or imprisonment for the faith which was in them.

Still, it was believed to be only a passing persecution, induced by the zeal of the New England colonies ; and Roger determined not to be driven from his original purpose until he received a clear command in the matter. John Woodhouse, however, thought it best to depart with the next tide, and the remainder of the company went with him ; some to the welcoming shores of Rhode Island, others to that beautiful isle lying in an inlet of the sea near the eastern point of Long Island, which belonged entirely to Nathaniel Sylvester. Nathaniel was a devoted Quaker, and in his little domain the persecuted always found comfort and protection ; so that it was known even then by its blessed name of Shelter Island.

At first Roger thought of taking Olivia there ; but shelter of a peculiarly pleasant character was speedily offered. There lived then at Gravesend, on Long Island, the Countess Mordee, a noble Puritan lady, much spoken of by the Dutch historian Croese. She had recently

become a Quakeress, and at her house at Gravesend the meetings of Friends were held.

With this lady Olivia remained more than the first year of her exile; for Roger's intentions in the new life to which he had dedicated himself included missions, and he had been hindered in the making of his own home by an impression of religious duty to visit the Barbadoes, and also the Virginia colony. During this time Olivia had heard no voice out of her past. A Friend whom her father met in Virginia asserted that he had left several letters for her with Elizabeth Harris, who was going to Oyster Bay; but Elizabeth Harris had not been permitted to preach there, and the letters had never reached Olivia's hand. Neither had she had any opportunity of sending a word to Nathaniel or to her aunt. Many English men and women had indeed been at Gravesend, but none expected to return speedily; or if they did, they were not going near the North Country. And this silence of the living is of all silences the hardest to bear. She sent her soul forth to seek her beloved in such eager, longing thoughts that she could not but feel sad and depressed when it always came back without any apprehension of sympathy.

But one day, nearly fourteen months after her landing, a young man called upon the countess, and he was going direct to Westmoreland. He would pass the gates of Kelderby. He would see and speak to Nathaniel. Oh, how her hands trembled as she wrote! The countess watched her speaking face with an emotion full of the memories of her own youth. She went to Olivia, and kissed her.

"Oh, Cornelia," she answered, "to think that he will touch this paper!" And she touched with her lips the white messenger of her love.

It was one of the gloomiest days in January when it reached Nathaniel. The mountains around Kelderby stood up black and menacing against the ghastly neutral tint of the sky behind them; and the dripping crags, the sea of barren heather, and the gray, stony road through it, were the symbols of the joyless ways of his own life. Down this road he saw the bearer of his letter coming, and his quick-eared spirit heard in his footsteps a tone of hope. The stranger himself had a kind of familiarity; he was like a man met in a dream; and Nathaniel was hardly astonished when he took the letter from his inner pocket and put it into his hand.

And because love has a tireless curiosity about the beloved, Nathaniel kept his guest in his room all night; and though they talked of many subjects, every one ended in Olivia. She was well, and she said she was happy. Nathaniel felt unspeakably grateful for this assurance. Also, the aching silence had been broken; there was hope in the very circumstance. He was not ashamed of the tears of joy that filled his eyes, — not ashamed to linger over every word, to touch the insensate paper with an almost sacred emotion, to lay it where his beating heart would be constantly and consciously aware of its presence.

Never had Nathaniel more needed the influx of some outside consolation. In Kelderby there was the gloom and shadow of coming grief. The country was on the verge of anarchy, — Richard Cromwell trembling at the dangers of his office, and eager to escape them; and General Monk, with the army at his back, secretly working for the king's return.

“I shall be the last Kelder of Kelderby, Nathaniel,” the baron had often said lately. “Charles Stuart is coming back, and De Burg will have his way.”

It was not for himself the old man was troubled. It was for the past and future Kelders he mourned. For men in those days entertained not only a present but a reflective affection. The pictured faces on the walls had a personality to him; and he saw in Nathaniel not only the son whom he loved, but also the father of fair sons he might never see on earth, but who he believed would still be bound to him by imperishable though invisible ties. Every generation transmits less and less of this reflective love; but the men who want it are poorer in its lack than they know.

It happened that on this day the baron was so unwell that he kept his room. He was drawing nigh to three-score years and ten, and was frequently conscious of that limpness of body which, like the limp falling of leaf upon leaf in a plant, shows the decay of living power to keep all erect. Public events made him very anxious; and though he did not give Nathaniel any verbal sympathy he saw the young man's suffering, and suffered with him. Only, at seventy years of age men feel it to be impossible to force events.

In the twilight when he awakened from his afternoon sleep, he saw Lady Kelder sitting by the fire knitting. He watched her a few minutes before she was conscious of his observation, and he saw that she was annoyed and mentally busy.

“What is it, Joan?”

She lifted her face, and the wrinkles went out of her brow, and a pleasant light came into her eyes. “Are you better, Odinel? — and as to my trouble, it is an old one, Baron. I conceive myself a tolerably patient woman, but I confess to being at this hour much moved. Here is a man from the Dutch plantation in America, with more news than is good news, — a tedious, troublesome

fellow mixing up his religion in all affairs, even with a subject so little worthy of it as that Quaker Prideaux and his girl Olivia."

"I remember. A very righteous man was Prideaux."

"'Tis the girl concerns us. You would think that Nathaniel had got a kingdom, instead of a letter from her. Blessed be God, there is the ocean between them!"

"Olivia Prideaux is a sweet woman; very lovely, very pure and good. Forget that she is a Quakeress, and who so worthy of our Nathaniel?"

"A sweet woman — so good, so good! I have heard that Athens banished her greatest man because she was weary of hearing that he was so just, so just! I understand Athens. I am too much of a mortal woman myself to wish a daughter so good, so good! Let her be banished. America is neighbourhood close enough."

"Joan, my dear heart, your words are much harder than your real thoughts."

"She maketh trouble wherever she goeth. Even at sea men must be sinning and fighting about her. In her letter to Nathaniel she tells a wondrous story of John de Burg boarding their ship; and at the last moment, when life and honour were not worth a pin's fee, John de Burg falls dead, or is struck dead by lightning, and a storm carries the wicked men away, and the Quaker saints get safely into harbour. Faith, I have no patience with such pretensions! From a very trifle the tongue or the pen kindleth a great matter. Do you indeed believe such things?"

"That, and much more, may be true. The ocean is the highway of devils, and God had need to work miracles on it. But, in truth, a great storm is no miracle; and good men have perished by his lightning, as well as

evil men. Nevertheless, these Quakers have a mighty faith, and miracle is the child of faith. By it we are told we can move mountains, and how much easier to move the good-will of Him whom winds and waves and the swift lightning obey."

"I have had faith all my life. Surely the Puritan has as good a faith as the Quaker, and I have asked deliverances with faith, and they have not come. Faith is a hard thing to understand, Baron; not even Minister Duttred can make a good explanation of it. Very fine sermons he has preached on faith, but I am not wise enough to understand them. And truly I think others are in the same case."

"'Tis most likely; yet a Quaker lad whom I met keeping a few sheep on the fellside told me in a few words the secret. 'Faith,' said he, 'living faith, apprehends God with the heart, not with the reason.' Ah! Joan dearest, as I draw near to the Invisible I think less and less of reason and more and more of faith."

She looked steadily at him. His voice, though low, penetrated to the root of her being. For the first time she realized that he was an old man, and that they might not be very long together. He lay on a large sofa covered with black sheepskins, and a rug of the same material covered him. Against this sombre wrap the pallor and emaciation of age would have been remarkable but for the suffusing glow of the radiant soul behind. She went softly to his side, and put her arms under his head, and laid her face against his, and whispered words that he had taught her in the days of their youth.

And he answered her as she loved to hear him speak: "We have had such a happy life, Joan. So much in our forty years together. Of all God's good gifts to me you are best and best loved."

“And our dear son, Odinel?”

The baron's face shadowed a little. “I am grieved to my heart for Nathaniel. He suffers so much, and I suffer with him, Joan. He hath been a good son to us.”

“Truly so, save in one thing.”

“He carries all my cares; he bates me not one tittle of my respect; his love shields me from every small vexation; he troubles me not with his troubles; he asks nothing for himself, — a noble youth, Joan. I would to God I could see him happy ere I go away forever!”

“His pale, kill-joy face is complaint enough. It offends me every day, and every hour of the day.”

“Yea, he hath fallen off his flesh past belief; and he is more sad and silent than his years and affairs warrant. 'Tis easy to see that he hath a heart-sickness beyond our power to cure.”

“But if that Quaker girl were here he would be ten years younger in an hour. He is so distracted with love for her.”

“I remember forty years ago, Joan. I was distracted with love also.” His eyes sought hers; and the memory of that dead year softened her heart, and she drew his thin face closer to her breast and kissed it.

“If you could give Nathaniel his wish in this matter, Joan, it would make my last days very happy. If he marry not this girl, he will marry none other. Is he to be the last Kelder? I am sad when I think on it.”

“And 'tis very cruel in Nathaniel to give you such matter for sadness. No, he is not a good son if he does all else and then undoes all by this left-handed blow.”

But the baron's words had wounded her in the most secret and loving depths of her soul. That night she sat a long time musing before the fire in her room. The

declining beauty of memories and regrets was on her face. She felt that the silver cord that moored her to time was being slackened, and that if her husband left this world before her she would be very lonely in life.

"He is sprung of earth's best blood and of heaven's finest spirit," she said with a tearful pride, "and I thank God that I have been his dear wife! What if I should give him his desire? 'T would make him happy. For his sake, for his dear sake, I could — perhaps — swallow that Quaker girl — with a gulp." Then sweet memories and sweet influences gathered round her; she lost herself in a reverie of gracious recollections of the days of her youth, — the holy trials and peace of its home; the father and mother whom she had so tenderly loved; the little sisters who had died when they were playing children at her side.

When Jael entered she spoke to her with a sigh of relief. It was good to have been a little beyond earth, but she was not one made for long flights. "I have been thinking of my father and mother, Jael, and of my little sisters Mary and Elizabeth. I believe they answered my thought. I felt as if they were present."

"It is a dull time, my Lady, and I would n't be welcoming any freits and fancies. I can't think the dead come back for a thought. It is n't likely."

"Thought may be prayer, Jael."

"Yes, my Lady. If you see a spirit, then you know it is there; but as for feelings —"

"If there is a rose in the room, Jael, though the room be dark, you know that the rose is there. If a spirit is in the room, though you see it not, you may know that it is there."

"Certainly. How does Master do to-night?"

“He is better, but troubled about his son and that Quaker girl. Jael, I am afraid she will be Lady of Kelderby yet.”

“We often plan things a deal worse than God ever means them to be. I would n't borrow trouble of the day you never saw, my Lady.”

“A strange story the girl tells of John de Burg's stopping their ship, and of his being struck down by lightning just as her father's life and her own honour were in extremity. I make no account of such special interferences. Too far off they always happen.”

“Nay, then, you should n't say that. There was Farmer Metcalf of Satterlee, — that is n't far off, I'm sure; and the judgment he brought upon himself hundreds came from east and west to see. It was in the year the king suffered, and he was a bit of a royalist, they do say. But so or not, he had a fine field of barley as ever grew in Westmoreland. And he was standing in one of his sinful tempers looking at it when Joseph Schofield and Timothy King came by. They bid him good-morning, but he was too surly to say, ‘good,’ let alone do it; and he never answered them a word. Then Timothy, thinking to please him, said, ‘You have a fine growing field of barley, Farmer.’ And he turned with an oath and answered, ‘To be sure I have, if God Almighty will only let it alone.’ My Lady, God Almighty did let it alone. It never grew another particle, and when all the fields around were ready for the sickle Metcalf's barley was not in the ear. So it drooped and withered away, for no man durst cut it down, and the farmer himself grew moping melancholy, and feared God and man, and hid himself from the sight of all who came to see the wonder. And his word was that ‘God needed not to damn him, for he had damned himself there and then.’

And to be sure, if all tales be true, John de Burg was fit to provoke even the patience of the Eternal."

There was a short silence after Jael's testimony to the visible judgments of God, and Lady Kelder rose and went to her dressing-table. It stood in a recess of the large window, and she drew aside the curtains and looked out. Banks of gray clouds were drifting rapidly over the gray sky; gloom, wildness, desolation, were all around. Suddenly there was a soft, sad sound of human voices. They rose and fell, and sometimes died away altogether. Jael's lips were silently moving.

"Do you hear the singing, Jael? What is it?"

"Janet Bell died at sundown. They came to Kelderby for fire and salt and candlelight. 'T is the corpse-dressers coming home, belike."

"I thought it was the death dirge."

She stood listening until the small company passed. The wild, sad notes, with their old, old words, rose and fell on her consciousness; when they were too low to be articulate her memory supplied the loss, and when they rose in a plaintive prayer at the last line she involuntarily echoed the imploration:—

"This ae night, this ae night,
Every night and a',
Fire, salt, and candlelight,
And Christ receive the soul!"

XIX.

ANASTASIA'S BEST SIDE.

“ The gods deride,
Eying the boaster proud no more,
Struggling amid the surging tide ;
Shorn of his strength, he yields to Fate.
The cape he weathers not, but thrown
On Justice' reef, with precious freight
He perisheth for aye.”

“ As in the land of darkness yet in light,
To live a life half dead, — a living death.”

EVERY one should silently bear his own burden, rather than abridge the comfort of others ; and Nathaniel acted upon this principle, both before and after the receipt of Olivia's letter. There was trouble and anxiety enough in Kelderby without his adding his personal disappointments to the general ill-fortune. A bad harvest and an unusually severe winter followed. Many of the fishing-boats were lost at sea, and hundreds of the sheep perished in the great snow-drifts. Richard Cromwell abdicated the honours his great father left him, and Charles Stuart came back to the throne of England.

After this event the Kelders held Kelderby as those ready at any moment to resign it. They were sure of De Burg's animosity ; what power he had to carry out his evil desires was a thing beyond their judgment. Charles had been to his adherents in exile both noto-

riously prodigal and notoriously indifferent. Royalists were angry at the leniency which many attributed to good nature, but which was, in reality, the result of a selfish temperament impatient of any matters but such as related to its sensual gratification.

De Burg considered himself to have been specially neglected. Charles had made promises to him, as he had to scores of other gentlemen, which he was both unwilling and unable to perform. At first he had prospects of a wealthy office and an increase of lands and honours. But a sudden blight fell upon his hopes. The king's manner entirely changed, his friendly confidence became a freezing politeness; and when De Burg met his Majesty walking in the park with his hand upon Strickland's shoulder he understood the reason of the change; and he knew also that Charles, in the great pressure made upon his remembrance, was only too glad of excuses for withdrawing his favour.

He had hoped much from Anastasia's influence at the court; but Anastasia had worn out her influence before the king touched his sceptre. Her visits to France had been too frequent. She had wronged her fair name, and won no tangible result excepting the revocation of all edicts of outlawry against her brother. Perhaps Charles considered that the pardon of so great a criminal cancelled all his obligations to the lady and her father. The real cause was a deeper one. Anastasia was not a courtier. She had no control over her temper and her feelings. She lacked the little arts which gave inferior beauties superiority over her, and she was a flaming target for such women as Castlemain and Portsmouth. Their public tiffs amused the king for a little while, but they finally bored him; and when it came to that point Anastasia's day was over.

In the October following that wild May revel which had ushered in the new Stuart tyranny, De Burg and his daughter returned to Kendal. Both had changed much in their absence. De Burg had grown stout, and his hair had become quite white. Anastasia had lost the bloom and elasticity of youth. Travel, anxiety, and the petty annoyances of her court life had left indelible marks, and "failure" was written broadly over all her life.

Their house had been used by Puritan soldiers as a barrack, and it was but the wreck of a once fine dwelling. A gloomy first meal the father and daughter ate in their recovered home. They had anticipated such a different return, and they were each in their hearts inclined to blame the other for the utter lapse of their claims and the sudden withdrawal of royal favour.

"I am better here, after all," said De Burg, looking round upon his disfigured dining-room. "I was an eyesore in London, but they rung the bells in Kendal when they heard I was coming back; and my old servants, — honest people, — how they trooped around my horse! You saw that I could scarce make way for them."

"You feed and clothe them, — honest people."

"As for the king, he is —"

"Just what I told you, when I first went to Paris."

"Knowing him so well, then, you ought to have used him to better purpose."

"I am no courtier."

"You are a woman."

"I'll swear you are less than a father."

She lifted her eyes so reproachfully that De Burg could not answer her. They finished the meal in silence, and then De Burg sat down to smoke on his desolated hearth. Anastasia made no further effort to

discuss their affairs. She felt sure it would end in re-crimination. Listlessly she wandered about the room, noting the places on the wall left vacant by the loss of pictures; the cabinets emptied of their Indian curiosities and china; the poverty of the oak buffet, that had once shone with silver. In a corner, half hidden by a sofa, she saw something familiar lying. She stooped and lifted the object. It was her lute. Every string was broken; they hung around it rusty and tuneless forever. A few bitter tears sprung to her eyes; she winked them angrily away, and carrying the piteous-looking thing in her hands, bade her father good-night, and went slowly to her chamber.

It had suffered less than the main rooms; perhaps the rough soldiers had been touched by the many feminine appeals to their respect which it contained. That unhappy blue and white dress which she had sworn she would never wear again still hung in the awmrie. There were odds and ends of ribbons and laces about. A pair of tiny bronze slippers, with faded bows of pink ribbon on them, lay before the dressing-glass. The very shepherdess hat she had worn on that fateful afternoon when she played shuttlecock with the heart of Nathaniel Kelder—and lost her game—hung on a nail by the window. Chairs had been removed, and the large cheval-glass was cracked; but the oak bedstead, with its fantastic carving and damask curtains, stood as she had seen it all her life. And it was evident the store of linen had not been discovered, for it was spread with fine sheets aromatically fragrant from their long seclusion with lavender.

The servants had forgotten a fire, but she was glad of it. A fire conduced to reflection, and she did not want to reflect. It would have increased the temperature,

and she was already feverishly hot. The cool, gloomy room with its snowy expanse of sheets and pillows was more inviting.

With the force of old habit she put the candle near the dressing-mirror, and sat down before it. She had on a brown velvet dress laced in front, and she began to loosen the silken cord, which was passed round small gold buttons. She did not hurry; in fact, she dallied with the task, as if its postponement would delay some misfortune. Beneath this open front, filling in the diamond-shaped spaces made by the lacing, there was a white stomacher dotted with pearls. She began deliberately to count them, and then, swift as light, there came to her memory that wretched afternoon of her wedding-day, when she sat in the same place counting the pearls on her shoes. She had resolved not to think of the past, and there it was and would not be put away.

“And this is the end of it all,” she said, glancing up at the shepherdess hat, but at the same moment taking from her bosom a letter.

It was a letter from Pastro, written in very bad English mixed with very good French. It told her that John de Burg was at Chenage waiting to see her there; also that he was ill and needing her assistance.

“Every time I hear of John he is ill,” she said impatiently. “What has come over the man? And ’t is so long since I saw him. There is some mystery to be reached, and I know it will be a miserable one. What else comes to me? I have a mind to forswear the Devil and live religiously.”

But if she was foolishly fond of any earthly creature, she was fond of her brother; and she determined to go to Chenage early on the following day. So much must

have happened during her absence, and she had heard nothing of it. Letters had indeed come, and once a very welcome bag of gold pieces; but the message was ever the same,—“The Captain is sick, but will come soon.”

As she turned her curls around her fingers she anticipated the happy moment when she could say to him: “John, here is your pardon for all past offences; and here is your commission as privateer from Charles, King of England.” Her next dream was to reconcile father and son. She hoped yet to see John the acknowledged heir of De Burg. In London he could now visit her openly, and as the years went by the people whom he had wronged would die, or they would forget, or their forgiveness might be purchased. She had many lovers, but no friend in whom she trusted, with whom she could throw off all disguises; and she expected in the companionship of John the satisfaction of a heart hungry for sympathy, and finding it abundantly.

When she came to breakfast in the morning she wore her riding-habit. “I am going to Chenage, Father,” she said. “Will you find any content in going with me?”

“Go to Chenage! Not for a dukedom. Why not sell Chenage? Its price will renew and refurnish De Burg. I should not think you would have any liking for Chenage, Asia.”

“Liking for Chenage! Good God! have you any liking for Appleby jail? Chenage was a prison-house, a torture-chamber to me.”

“Then sell it.”

“There are things to be considered. I do not know whether the man is alive or dead. He may come back.”

“You know that he will never come back. I have not accused you, Asia. I have too great a sense of your misfortunes. But why keep up a pretence with me? Think on it till to-morrow.”

“I may not return for a few days.”

“Pray, whom do you entertain there?”

“Father, once you mistrusted me when it had been far better to have let me alone. Had you done so, John had never gone to Sandys, and the Quaker had not given the king an opportunity to be virtuous at your expense. Oh, so much sorrow had been spared!”

“Peace! Are we such fools as to rake among the ashes of dead days? We have been disappointed to a degree (confound the king's enemies!), and 't is the part of wisdom to hide it. Sell Chenage, refurnish De Burg, and if you have an ounce of wisdom left, marry the young lord who has been your servant so long.”

“He has an attack of virtue lately. My visits to Paris have offended him. Faith, he is so smitten with the honour of the dead Southports he has no stomach for his own happiness! I am sick of the admirable man.”

“Well, as you pleased yourself in your first marriage, I have great reason to expect you will be in the humour to satisfy me in the future. But we will leave the discourse on it at the present. I find in it no entertainment. I wish you as much pleasure as you look for in your visit.”

She was burning with the injustice of her father's charge, but it is sometimes impossible to answer an accusation at once brutally unkind and flagrantly unjust. The magnitude of the lie rouses a momentary storm of surprise and indignation, and its final result is a speechless contempt. Anastasia suffered her father to go without denying the imputation. She would challenge it in

the future ; at this hour she was glad to escape his company and espionage.

She reached Chenage about noon. There she was lady paramount, and her men and women gathered eagerly around her with congratulations and offers of service. It was her policy to treat them with a generous kindness as well as with an exacting hauteur, and she was extremely popular. She took her steward's arm into the parlour, and sitting down with an air of exhaustion, asked after "the poor sick gentleman."

"Captain Latour? Ah, Mistress! You will indeed be astonished. Such a change! Only God in heaven—"

"What have you to do with God in heaven? Be not so presumptuous. Is Lieutenant Pastro with his captain?"

"He left this morning, Mistress, — before day-dawn."

"In what room is the Captain?"

"In the room with the Indian hangings."

Anastasia drew her brows together. It was the master's room. She had not occupied it since his disappearance, and she was sorry John had been put there. While she sat and drank she talked over the affairs of the house and farm. A strange reluctance to meet whatever sorrow was in that room had come to her. With the goblet of wine at her lips she shivered and turned sick at heart ; but she would not permit her servant to attend her there. When he was busy removing the silver she went quietly up the steep, dim stairs alone.

For a moment she stood before the closed door of the room. All was still as a grave. She heard not a movement, not even the rustle of a paper or the stir of a restless foot. The suspense was unendurable. Perhaps he was sleeping.

Softly she turned the handle, and the door moved

softly inward. A man was sitting in the chair facing her. But it was not John de Burg. It could not be John de Burg. He was shrivelled, as the kernel of a nut is sometimes shrivelled in its shell. He had lost his stature, as if a mighty hand had pressed him downward. He was quite blind.

She closed the door in a breathless terror and slipped on her knees beside him. "John!" she sobbed. "John! John! Is it you, John?"

A single tear welled out from his sightless eyes, fell on his cheek, and lay there. She kissed it away. "Is it you, John?"

"It *was* me, Asia. Now that you have come I will curse heaven and earth, and die."

"I will stay with you. I will give my life to you. John, I have your full pardon. No one can hurt you now."

"No one will do me so much mercy. I am like that old murderer Cain, — there is a mark on me."

"How was it, John?"

"The lightning struck me. I was after those damned Quakers. They were in my hands. Ten minutes, five minutes sooner, and all had been to my wish. The girl would have been on my own ship."

"She escaped then? Oh, John!"

"They all escaped. I was beside myself, or I had seen the bolt above me. I would not see or hear Pastro's warnings. I had had *the dream*, and *he* had warned me; but until it was too late, I forgot all except the pleasant work I had in hand. It was so sweet I must needs dally with it. Oh, oh, the cursed fate of it!"

"John, where have you been since?"

"Ask Pastro. I can't tell you. For weeks — I don't know how many — I was like a dead man. He let no

one know how dead I was. He said he got his orders from me. But at last the cowards found it out, and they would not sail with me on board. I was left at Mar-seilles. I was taken to Calais. I don't remember much since the blow. I can only think of what happened before it."

"You remember that?"

"Every deed, word, and look."

"John, is Chenage alive?"

"Dead and damned."

"Before you were hurt?"

"Yes; that is one thing to be grateful for. Hell would be a happy place to Chenage if he could see me here. He went first. Ha, ha! I got that advantage of him."

"Dead?"

"Ay, dead."

"Where was he buried?"

He laughed a thin, shrill, diabolical shadow of a laugh. "Buried! Do you want to put a monument in the mid-sea to his good temper and kind heart? Asia, you make me feel again. Ha, ha! Chenage's grave!"

"Well, he had one — somewhere?"

"Ay, a safe one; tons of stone could not make it safer."

She took his hand. It was shrunken like that of a very old man, brown and claw-like, but she kissed and fondled it. And he would have smiled had he been able, but his face was rigid; it looked as if with every movement it must crackle like parchment.

"You have not married again?"

"A-God's mercy I have not! I belong to you now, John. You have met ill fortune; I will help you to endure it."

“Not in this house, I pray, Asia. I don’t fear devils, but I don’t want their company till I am out of the flesh and a fair match for them. The nights are terrible. I see without eyes.” And he shuddered visibly.

“John, I want to sell Chenage. I would have done so, only I feared — I thought — if he should come back.”

“The sharks ate him. Now do you fear? Do you think he will come back?” He could not see the white terror of her face, so he went carelessly on: “He was getting very weak, and he was going mad, and the men were all a-weary of him. One day a school of these fishes of the Devil came alongside. I told him they had come for him; and they got him. He deserved his fate, all of it. You think that, Asia?”

The eagerness with which he asked the question, the desperate anxiety on his sightless face, touched the tenderest spot in Anastasia’s heart. She understood that he was troubled, perhaps superstitious, about Chenage’s death, and she hastened to give him such assurance as she could.

“He deserved it all, and far more, John. It was beyond mortal power to give him the punishment he deserved. He was nothing better than a human shark, and he went to his kind.”

He was grateful for the strength of her assertions, though they did not really comfort him. For it is impossible to escape, even in this life, the miserable remorse that follows sins planned for and deliberately worked out, day by day, in spite of all the remonstrances of conscience and the lets and bars of circumstances. All mortals are subject to sudden temptations, to slips into sensual mire, to the ready injustice which springs from self-seeking; but it is the premeditated sins that taint the whole moral nature and make the hour of death full of horror.

In a dim way Anastasia apprehended something of what her brother was suffering. "John," she said, "you must go out of this room. Its air tastes of the men and women who have breathed it. It makes me shudder. I shall have a bed put in the dancing-gallery for you. There is plenty of morning sunshine there, and it has a door leading into the garden. You ought to be in the garden a great deal. You ought to be there now."

"I cannot walk very well, Asia."

"Then you must be helped." And she called her steward and her groom, and directed them to assist the Captain. In a few minutes she had every servant at work. The best and most comfortable furniture was taken to the vacant gallery, which had been the ball-room of the house; and while these changes were in progress she watched John with satisfaction. He was evidently enjoying his walk in the October sunshine. She noticed that he was talking with animation to the men upon whose arms he leaned. He came in weary and hungry, but with a different tone in his voice, and after eating he sank gratefully down upon a large couch, and was soon in a deep sleep.

Perfect silence encouraged this rest; Anastasia forbade a movement. She sat beside him, and watched and thought hour after hour until the sun set, and the gloaming faded to darkness, and the eery feeling crept through the lonely house.

It happened that the chair which she had taken faced the blank west wall, and it was covered with portraits. Some power drew her eyes to one a little out of the direct line of vision, and on it for a few minutes they were riveted. It was her own portrait, surely. Yet the dress was antiquated; she had never worn anything like it. She went softly on tiptoes to the pictured lady, and

looked earnestly into her face. What a stormy, beautiful face it was ! She seemed to understand the passionate resistance in it, the fear and contempt, the wistful, hopeless glance of the eyes, full of a presentiment of sorrow which as yet they were determined to disbelieve.

“It is myself,” she whispered. “When Chenage was torturing me I have looked in the glass and seen the very face I see there.” She took a footstool and stood upon it, and she found in one corner the name of “Cecilia Temple Chenage, A. D. 1600.” A strange love and pity warmed her heart. She wept as the young often do weep at the image of their own fancied suffering or death. “My dear,” she said, softly speaking to the picture, — “my dear, if you are me, and I was you, be content. I have revenged your wrongs.”

The pictures were all more or less faded, but this face had a special clarity among them. Its white oval, with some stray gleam of light upon it, had probably been the quality of its attraction. She looked at it until it seemed alive ; the mouth parted, and the eyes followed her.

Then a sudden thought made her turn to its companion picture. She expected to find in it the Roderick Chenage who had been her own husband’s example. The men of the house were all much alike, — fine, healthy, well-grown, and well-groomed animals, full of a brutal vitality. Almost any of them, painted about the age of thirty, would have passed for a likeness of Roger Chenage. When she found the one she looked for she shut her lips tightly, and said through them, —

“I thought as much. You are a proper grandsire for him. You look precisely as he looked the day he brought me here. Pah ! What a nest of villany this house is ! I will sell it to Mowbray of Milnthorpe. He hates me and I hate him, and it would content me to cage an

enemy here. He used to be one of my humblest servants; but he is a deadly drinker, and he has grown fat, and what is unforgivable, suspicious. He said he would bet a Cromwell fifty-shilling gold piece that I knew what had become of Chenage. I don't like him, but he wants to buy Chenage and he shall have it."

This thought gave her mental occupation. She sat down and remained motionless, eagerly busy with plans for her own and John's future. For it never occurred to her that their separation was now possible. John had not blamed her for his evil fate, but she blamed herself. Looking at him as he lay sleeping by her side, a feeling almost motherly came into her heart. She would defend him and succour him to the last extremity. Neither for father nor for lover would she give him up.

He awoke after five hours of sound sleep, and his face at the first flash of consciousness filled Anastasia with pity. What misery there must be in that momentary recognition of all his loss and helplessness! The picture of it on his face was the revelation of despair.

"John," she said, "you have slept five hours. It is eight o'clock. Now we will have supper, and then I will sit with you all through the night if you wish."

"If you only would, Asia!"

"'T will content me much to do so."

For many weary, awful months John had not passed a night so endurable. She told him about the Lady Cecilia, and she made much of the picture that was so like herself. Though she had never heard of the transmigration of souls, love and pity taught her the doctrine; and she made John feel that he had been the elected avenger of wrongs too intolerable to endure the grave's oblivion.

When trembling and horror and the sense of presence seized him, she gravely ridiculed the fear. "Your soul is

sick as well as your body, John. Chenage here! Impossible! If he were, would I not know it? I was his murderer, — you were only my knife. Let him come to me. Faith! I do not fear him without his body." But her brave words belied her. She was white with terror, and shivering through all her soul with that coldness which defies heat of sun or fire, and which gives a sense of the supernatural.

Toward morning they both slept heavily. The sun rose in a silvery haze, and streaming through the eastern windows fell upon the unconscious brother and sister. John lay on the sofa in a limp, nerveless heap, his once handsome face as placid as a child's. Anastasia sat beside him, her head against the leather-cushioned chair, her habit loosened, and her dark curls covering her white throat and bosom. She woke first, and for a few moments she looked steadily at her companion. The impulse of prayer was in her heart, but she was ignorant of its motions, and knew not its language. Yet perhaps her unselfish love and pity was the next thing to it.

She remained at Chenage until afternoon, and went back to De Burg with one settled purpose, — that John should be wherever she was. She expected opposition, and she knew that in her heart there was a controlling fear of her father. Through it he had made her marry Chenage, but he should not make her desert John. The instinct of defence and protection — the mother-instinct for helplessness that clings — had been born of full stature in her. It flashed in her eyes, and gave an air of defiance to her manner.

De Burg had been occupying the day in carefully examining his ruined home. He had made an estimate of the repairs and furniture necessary for each room, the offices to be rebuilt, the work to be done in the park and

garden. He discovered that a farm adjoining, which he had long desired, was to be sold. The old Puritan who owned it was going to the New England Colony. It could be bought for half its value, and Chenage would do all this and leave besides a comfortable income from the residue of ready money.

On Anastasia's return he told her with his usual bluntness the result of his investigations. He went into the statement with some particularity, but he noticed that she listened with the air of a person who had made a decision beyond argument and beyond change.

"I bless myself that things are not worse," he said; "and yet both house and land are hugely out of order. 'T will take as much as five thousand pounds to restore the place, I can assure you. Has it yet entered your mind to consider the sale of Chenage?"

"I am in the humour to sell it to Mowbray of Milnthorpe. He has offered me eighteen thousand pounds. 'T is but half its value, but 't will serve my purpose better than delay."

"In God's name, then, close with him. I shall be but very little myself until De Burg is as it should be. I will see about workmen at once."

"Take patience, sir! I give not up what I paid so dearly for unless for some small selfish consideration. I will have my room and the two rooms adjacent made as certainly mine as the abbey is your own. No one shall have power to enter them. I will entertain there for life — or for his will and pleasure — one whom I am bound to care for. Calm yourself, sir! I am not to be brow-beaten by your passion in this matter. The man is blind and helpless. He is dear to me. He has rights here beyond even my affection."

De Burg was staring at her with an amazement that had

something of fear in it. His wit had touched the truth instantly, though he would not advance boldly to it.

“You speak in riddles, Mistress, and are trying to escape obliging me by making a condition beyond all reason. Who is this man?”

“He is called Captain Latour. You need know him by no other name. He cannot see you, and you may make a point of not seeing him. I promise that I shall use all my intelligence to keep him outside your presence. I will have his room furnished to my wish. The mid-room is for his attendant. My own apartment has been much respected, and it will require but few additions. In a week I can give you one thousand pounds. I will add four thousand pounds as soon as the sale of Chenage is completed.”

He was in a white heat of passion before she finished her proposal.

“Captain Latour! John de Burg, you mean. And you have a thousand pounds! Truly, you are a good daughter to hide so much gold and see your father at his wit’s end for a few sovereigns.”

“If you will have truth where less than truth would be for your comfort and welfare, take it. Captain Latour *is* John de Burg.”

“Then you conceive me to be a man beyond the sense of honour. Is my room to shelter a villain and an outlaw?”

“Lord, sir! your roof has sheltered more villains than saints. And John is no longer an outlaw. He hath the king’s pardon and also the king’s commission. As for the gold, ’t was not mine until yesterday; and if I said a thousand pounds, ’t is like enough to be much beyond it; for though John is blind, I trow he is rich enough to buy De Burg and make a present of it to the bats and owls.”

“Keep your temper, Mistress. Consider what a hubbub the news would cause an it were found out. I can remember the bells of Kendal church being rung backward when his ship was seen off the coast.”

“Surely you are to blame, sir, that a spirit of so much resource and bravery was not bended to nobler purposes. Trust me, in some respects others have been more guilty than he hath.”

“You say that he is blind?”

“Alas! struck blind by lightning.”

“And rich?”

“I think that he can pave his way into any house with gold. An you shut him out of yours, I shall keep Chenage and go to him.”

“I will have time to think o'er the matter. For my life I cannot understand your infatuation. But if he is to be at Chenage, as well be at De Burg. For you know, Asia, I am extremely at your mercy, loving you, as I do, with all my life.”

“I have known better men than you, Father, to lie about love and gold, but I will take your words and credit them. And as your anger mends not the past, why should it wrong the future? Must John's gold pass De Burg? The king has pardoned him; the lightning spared his life. Surely you, being his father, may give him shelter.”

“I shall be credited with some partnership in his crimes.”

“Have you so little opinion of your own standing? When did you begin to fear the ‘say so’ of your neighbour? But, indeed, John spoke somewhat of southern France, and 't was only for my sake he came here; and faith! though he were beggar, as well as blind, he should not come to me for love and lack it.”

“ If it was I — ”

“ Suffering in the same kind, I would stand for you to the same extent.”

“ I expect no such miracle of love. 'T is a hard case. I must lose your presence and let De Burg go to ruin, or I must save both to myself by the aid and the presence of a double-dyed villain.”

“ As I have been told, it was so that De Burg came to us. Could John be worse than that Lord Avenal de Burg who turned out upon the snow-covered moors one hundred nuns from this house? I have heard that the rest of his wicked deeds he wrote on a parchment with his own blood. You have that record, and are proud of it. 'T is like enough that future De Burgs will make tales and songs about John. Do you believe he is worse than many others of his age and humour? As for the neighbours, do they keep your will and your opinions, and order your house? By St. George ! I have more of the spirit of a man than you have.”

“ Mind this, Asia, I am neither to be rushed nor bullied by a woman's tongue. I will take time and thought, and I will do as seems right and honourable to me.”

With that he left her, and Anastasia lifted her lips in scorn for the little bluster, which she saw through very clearly. She had now no doubt as to the result of her offer. The pinch of gold grinds to impalpable dust such fragilities as honour and good report. What De Burg mainly wished to consider was the public stand he should take ; whether it would be best to bluff the truth in the face of all, or accept John as Captain Latour, and ignore all criticism on the subject.

He was much impressed by the very vagueness of John's reputed wealth. He looked at the great gray pile going to ruin for want of gold, and he determined

to sacrifice the passion of hate to the stronger passions which pleaded for its restoration, and for that popularity and congenial employment which building and reordering his house would give him.

But he had not that honesty of nature, nor even that common gratitude for help, which would have led him to take his son's hand as well as his son's gold. He resolved to hide all obligation behind the figment of "Captain Latour." People would talk, and very likely would say unkind things of Anastasia, but Anastasia was able to defend her own good name. She was indifferent, also, while he was supersensitive to public opinion, and could not endure the humiliating thought of having to explain himself in the smallest matter.

He delayed his acceptance of Anastasia's terms for three days, — a most unnecessary concession to a contemptible pride. For Anastasia had read his motives from the moment when, hearing of John's riches, he had descended from the plane of his own injured honour to the consideration of the hubbub his neighbours would make, and to the trifling memory of the bells ringing backward.

As soon as he had noisily shut the door behind him, she began to plan for her brother's comfort. She had chosen for him the rooms he had before occupied, because they would be familiar to him. He would remember the position of doors and windows and hearth, and even of the main pieces of furniture. She had mentally selected the old woman who was to be his constant attendant, and she decided to make the comforts and perquisites of the position sufficient to secure allegiance and discreet silence.

Before De Burg condescended to advise her of his submission the rooms were so thoroughly cleaned and

renovated that even a blind man must have been sensible of their atmosphere of comfort. In less than a week John was at home in them. His removal was accomplished during De Burg's visit to Milnthorpe about the sale of Chenage, and the circumstance was not mentioned to him. He asked no questions, and the few remarks made by the servants regarding the stranger were received with such icy anger that they were never repeated.

And very soon he was in the midst of a work which satisfied all his desires. John had been more generous than even Anastasia had dreamed of, and De Burg was adding a new wing, and building new stables, and laying out the garden afresh. In the course of a few weeks he had almost forgotten the humiliating condition which had made all this grandeur possible.

John's gold flowed with ready generosity, and John was never visible to him. This was partly owing to Anastasia's tact, partly to an unacknowledged but very real carefulness on his own part. He knew that on fine days Anastasia walked with her brother either in the park or upon the moor outside it, and he knew that the hour for this recreation was generally mid-afternoon, so at that time he was always with the workmen.

Neither was he sensible of any diminution in his daughter's attentions. She was ever ready to preside over his meals. She had her old-time alacrity in the discussion of their affairs. She was not a whit less disposed to differ with his opinions and to contend for her own way. She dressed with her old-time extravagance, she had many new lovers, and was apparently as eager as ever for the honours of the hunting-field and the ball-room.

But there was another Anastasia of whom the world

had no conception. Only one old woman and one man, blind and helpless, knew her. As soon as she entered John's room her face, her voice, her manner changed. And yet she always brought the world in which she ordinarily lived into it. Sitting by her blind brother's side, she told him every trifle that happened. He knew, through her, all the workmen, and what they were doing, and what progress they made. He saw through her vivid words his father's importance and impetuosity, and heard his comments and his vaunting and his anger. She clipped none of his oaths; she softened nothing of his thrasonical braggadocio and fanfaronade. She told him all about her lovers; she mocked and imitated them; there was not a man or a woman or a merry-making that he did not see through her eyes. She made him pass his hands over all her finery, and described its colours and beauty. If anything troubled her, if she received a slight or had a quarrel, John knew all about it.

The sympathy and companionship she craved she had in entire perfection. Shut in his narrow world, with only one creature to love, John made all her feelings his own. And she was under no temptation to deceive him. He enjoyed her spite and anger and reprisals and cutting words. In his lonely darkness he nursed her small social wrongs, and thought out stinging revenges for her. Whatever consolation John de Burg could derive from the perfect love of a nature kindred to his own was most completely his.

So the days and weeks passed on. The winter was open, and not unfavourable for much of the work. When it was, the lower rooms were noisy with artisans busy on the carved panels of the wainscoting, or in polishing the woods for the floors and furniture. One afternoon

Anastasia and her brother were walking slowly across the little strip of moor between the park and the highway. John liked to get from under the trees and feel the wind blowing freely over him. He was leaning on Anastasia's arm, his hat was in his hand, his face was lifted to catch the sunshine and the breeze. They were nearing the outermost corner of the park wall, and were on the point of turning, when a horseman rounded it. It was Nathaniel Kelder, and he realized in a moment not only that he saw John de Burg, but that the man was blind.

He stopped suddenly, and Anastasia also stood still. She looked into her brother's unconscious face, and then into Nathaniel's. It was a look that spoke with tongue and eyes and heart, — a look rapid as thought, pitiful as prayer. It said all that words could have said in a long petition. She dropped John's hand, and stood a trifle before him, — the involuntary movement of love ready to defend. The attitude gave to her anxious face a singular attraction, a power of entreaty not to be resisted.

Nathaniel lifted his hat, bowed his head, and rode on. She understood the movement; it was a promise of oblivion. She took her brother's hand again, and resumed their walk; but she was haunted by the look in Nathaniel's eyes, — the sudden and sad wonder, the quick apprehension, the quick pardon, the infinite pity. A moment revealed all, and she could hardly restrain the sharp cry of soul-pain that parted her lips.

As for John, he did not even ask who it was. He had once vowed, "by all the devils in hell," to take full vengeance upon Nathaniel Kelder; and Nathaniel had passed him with a prayer of pity, and he knew it not.

XX.

FOR LOVE'S SAKE.

“For love's strength standeth in love's sacrifice.”

“From olden faith how many a glorious deed
Hath lit the world ! its blood-stained banner led
The martyrs heavenward ; yea, it was the seed
Of knowledge, whence our modern freedom spread.”

“So will the shine
Of soul that strikes on soul make fair and fine
This earthly tenement. Thou shalt extol
The inner, that the outer love'ier seem.”

THE baron and Lady Kelder were sitting together in that confidential silence which is satisfied with the nearness of the loved one. Their thoughts were identical in kind, for both were reflecting that the following day would be the fortieth anniversary of their marriage.

In our age life is so exacting that old people have too often exhausted all poetic feeling, have become indifferent, and weary as travellers at nightfall. But this happy couple in spite of years had kept the dew of their youth. They were still easily moved and easily pleased. Their hearts blossomed like spring, though near the winter of age ; and their simple dignity, their green intellects, their kindness and ready cheerfulness gave them, in spite of their gray hairs, something of the air and the charm of youth.

The baron found his lady as beautiful as ever. Her figure was yet erect, her features were noble, her eyes as

young as they were at twenty ; so soft and limpid, as she sat this night opposite him, that he fancied he could look through them into the loving soul behind. A smile tender and gentle completed her face. It was not an inadvertent smile ; it had come naturally from the wife's last glance at her husband. For she had suddenly remembered the coming anniversary, and had with the thought lifted her eyes to him.

"A man after God's own heart," she whispered ; "and 't is the greatest honour I have to be loved by him."

Then her face saddened slightly ; she was in a little perplexity. Always hitherto she had been able to give him some trifle that he wished for or required as a wedding token. In their earlier years it had been a handsome garment, a set of laces, a horse, or a purse ; and on one memorable occasion, just before the battle of Marston Moor, the sword which typified her consent and sympathy.

In later years her tokens had usually taken the form of books. In the baron's corner the oak shelves were full of them, — polyglots of Antwerp and Paris, with such colossal theologians as Augustine, Jerome, Aquinas, Calvin. On a lower shelf the dumpy vellums of Dutch divines, at peace beside Bishop Hall and Dr. John Owen and Mr. Richard Baxter ; and nearest of all, Francis Bacon and Philip Massinger, Selden and Izaak Walton, with Quarles, Crashaw, Herbert, etc.

This year she had bought nothing. Their position was so uncertain that money had a value touching things which were invaluable. It might be required for simple existence, for comforts on which life depended ; she did not dare to spend a shilling lest it should afterward be sorely needed. Yet she was troubled at the omission. It had made her heart ache for many days. And she had

ransacked her coffers and cabinets in the hope of finding something that, either for its associations or its intrinsic value, might be worthy to offer. Nothing had come of her search, and to-morrow morning she could only give him again the love that was always new and young ; and she did not doubt but that her empty hands would be just as welcome as they were on the day of her bridal. Still, still she wished she had a token. In forty years it was her first failure. Then she remembered the wonderfully blessed year in which Nathaniel was born. The boy, the heir, had been her bride-day gift. So to-morrow was also Nathaniel's birthday. She had not forgotten it, but in this connection it came with a fresh significance. "A good son," she thought, "a dear, good son, a worthy Kelder ; and I love him with all my heart."

To this thought Nathaniel entered. She had grown accustomed to his gradual emaciation, and to the sadness in his eyes ; for he had always a smile for his parents, though one that brightened his face only for the passing moment. He had been to Kendal on important business, and he talked its circumstances fully over before he spoke of his meeting with Anastasia and John de Burg.

Lady Kelder was intensely curious on this subject ; and when Nathaniel described how the fierce, strong man had been, as it were, shrivelled up by fire and smitten blind by its flash, she trembled, and cried out, "Odinel ! Odinel ! You must —" Then she ceased, for she saw that the baron had covered his face, and she knew that he was praying.

After a few moments' silence Nathaniel said, "George Fox was speaking in Kendal to-day."

"Where?"

"He stood upon one of the stone tables in the open fish-market. You know it is but a little space, and quite

surrounded by shops and houses. Every window was thrown open and crowded with men and women, and below him the upturned faces were solid as a floor. Father! Mother! I pray you listen patiently to me. I am this night ashamed of my faith, and I find it impossible to excuse the things I have heard."

"Surely the Quakers are not complaining again. Has not the king been very considerate of their claims?"

"'Tis of the Quakers in New England I speak. Let Puritans no more accuse the Jesuits; they have far outdone them in cruelty and intolerance to men, women, and children."

"Nathaniel, I wonder not as it concerns women. Women preachers are a moral shock to all good Christians."

"Tell us briefly, Nathaniel, what George Fox said."

"There is no need that I tell you of the scourgings and imprisonments, and the doing to death in various ways, that have made the footsteps of Quakers in New England red wet-shod in their own blood. Governor Endecott — " ¹

"I knew John Endecott, Nathaniel, and I always thought him to be a stout Dorchester man as ever I had dealings with; a good fighter, and such a one as pleaded for free schools twenty years ago. No drinker, no dicer, and as fond of a garden and an orchard as a boy of his marbles."

"But now, Father, he is sharpened and hardened by the cruel preachers at his side; and by their counsel the gallows has been set up for the support of religion. On it they have already hanged — "

"Well then, Nathaniel, we have heard of the hanging of the two men and the woman preacher many a time

¹ Spelled so at this date.

and oft, and we have — if it please you — heard only the Quaker side of the matter. 'T is like enough they pushed themselves presumptuously where the Lord sent them not ; vain and vulgar men."

" Indeed, Mother, they were neither vain nor vulgar ; Robinson being the son of a great London merchant, well bred and well learned, and Stephenson a Yorkshire farmer who heard while at his plough the ' call ' which made him instantly leave his wife and children and home and go as the Lord sent him to testify on the gallows set up by priests on Boston Common. As for the woman, Mary Dyar, she was a comely and grave matron, with the soul of an evangelist and martyr. But, as my mother saith, 't is an old story, and there is newer matter to complain of. On the 14th of last January they hanged William Leddra, a Cornishman — "

" But what for, Nathaniel ? 'T is a kind of folly to say a man is hanged and then complain of it, for the punishment infers the crime."

" Not so. They could find no fault in him save that he preached Christ without their license, and assured the people that Christ spake truth when he said, ' I will come unto you, and abide with you ; ' not that he would send by any priest or preacher. And there are other men left under sentence of death, and women whipped barbarously through the streets, and cruelties unmentionable practised. Father ! Mother ! I must away yonder, even if I perish with my friends. I die daily here, I do indeed."

" Your friends the Prideaux ? Are they not in the Dutch colony ? "

" Indeed, I know not. I had short speech with George Fox, and he said he had cause to think that Roger Prideaux was in Boston ; and if he is there and

in prison, Olivia will —” He ceased speaking. A deathly paleness overspread his face, and large tears rolled unchecked from under his closed eyelids.

Lady Kelder looked at him in silence, and then rose quietly from her chair and left the room. The baron sat musing, with his eyes cast upon the rug at his feet. Silence, pregnant with thought and feeling, brooded between the men. At last the baron spoke.

“Nathaniel, I wish you to have the woman you love so truly. Go to her; go to her to-morrow.”

“My mother will never consent; and unless she give me some token of kindness to Olivia I go in vain. Olivia will not marry me without your blessing and my mother’s welcome. That I know most surely. But give me your blessing, Father, and I will go and see her once more; for my heart is rent with sorrow and anxiety, and I say truly that I am dying day by day.”

“Go, my son, and my blessing with you! And do not fear concerning the estate. Had De Burg been able to prejudice me therein, we had felt his hand ere this, I think.”

“But if question of this kind should arise while I am away?”

“I will call upon Strickland, and ask him to plead my cause.”

Nathaniel looked the thanks he felt little able to speak. He was worn out with physical fatigue and mental emotion, and glad to escape to such oblivion as a sleep tormented with fears for Olivia brought him.

Lady Kelder had gone away to think, but her bitter disquiet did not suffer her for some time to concentrate her mind on the subject filling it. She called Jael, and found that Jael had gone to visit a sick child. She wandered to the window, and with her heart full of the

two men before the parlour fire she looked into the night. The trees, made thin by autumn winds, let her vision sweep through them far off to the horizon, and a feeling of loneliness and immensity widened her soul. She cast her eyes upward, and the heavens spoke to her in their speech; and then, she knew not how, but her heart was softened, and she began to weep. Few and far between are such moments of godlike condition, but they do come, and blessed are they who have the grace to salute them.

So, as she stood there in the twilight, silent, motionless, humbly receptive to all good influences, she thought of her husband and son as she had never before thought of them and some heavenly power put an idea into her soul that threw all her nature into tumult,—a great thought, if she were only great enough to entertain it. She had been longing for a wedding token for her dear lord, and it was shown her how to offer him one most acceptable. But it was a gift only to be given by an absolute surrender of her closest self. Was she able to make so great a sacrifice? As she sat still in the dim light, searching the very depths of her feelings and intents, Jael entered. She lit the lights and prepared her lady's night toilet, moving very softly about, until Lady Kelder said, —

“Jael, what of the sick child?”

“Dead, my Lady. Only the soul's leavings there now. A bonny lad, and so like himself to the last moment that it is hard indeed to think of him as changed at all.”

“Poor mother!”

“Well, my Lady, Mary Skelton has a big family, seven lads and lasses, and the last one not a month old. He'll get little Geff's name belike, and step into his place.”

“Jael, you speak foolishly. One child can never take

the place of another child. Would I give to any other daughter the place of my lost Alice? God forbid! Ah, Jael, the dead loss and the vacant place are better than such compensation."

This loyal thought toward the dear dead hallowed and softened still more her gentle thoughts of the dear living. She fell asleep with a troubled and tossed and anxious heart, but the spirit of love brooded over the soul's tempest. When Lady Kelder awoke in the morning the sunshine was streaming through the east windows, and she opened her eyes with a smile. Jael, busy about her lady's toilet, noticed her cheerful alacrity; noticed also that her usual morning fret was lost in a silent pre-occupation that had nothing unhappy about it. But she thought the mood well accounted for by the anniversary it held in memory.

Now, there are some gracious souls who like to make the doing of a kindness a sort of personal festival. Lady Kelder bid Jael bring her handsomest silk robe, and she watched its arrangement before her mirror with a critical pleasure. Deep ruffles of fine English point shaded her yet beautiful hands, and a hood of the same lace fell with a picturesque and veil-like grace across her white hair. Jael settled every fold of lace and silk with a proud approval; and as the love of inferiors is generally grounded upon personal or social advantages, she left her mistress that morning exceedingly conscious of her superiority to all other women.

For a few minutes Lady Kelder stood motionless in the centre of her room. The sunshine fell all over her noble face and figure, her silk robe glistened in it, and her hands with the white ruffles above them had a startling delicacy against its sombre splendor. To her still face and dropped eyelids it gave a specially luminous

character, for as she stood thus she was blind to outward surroundings; she was searching with spiritual vision the very depths of her nature.

She was asking herself: "Can I do this thing with all my heart? Can I do it without reservation? Can I do it not only at this hour, but during all the days of my life?" Still as the woman stood and looked, she was fighting a great battle. "Can I do it? Can I do it cheerfully? Can I do it all my life?" For a few minutes this solemn inquisition impressed a serious religious gravity upon her countenance.

"For my dear love's sake! For my dear son's sake! For my Lord Christ's sake, I can do it! I can do it with all my heart and for all my life!" She whispered the words to God and herself; and as she did so her face grew bright, and she lifted clear open eyes to the heaven which by faith she apprehended.

As this act of self-renunciation was accomplished, she heard the baron's voice. He was in the garden beneath her window, and with a strange and happy exaltation she went to greet him; and as she was a very woman, she was conscious, even in its higher atmosphere, of a certain pleasure in her rich apparel and handsome appearance.

The baron stood with his son a little way down the main avenue. They were talking of Nathaniel's proposed voyage, and the young man leaned against the straight bole of a large larch-tree. The baron stood erect, facing him, and he had a few late flowers in his hand. Lady Kelder called their names in a joyful voice, and daintily lifting her silk skirt to avoid the dew on the shrubs, went toward them. Both turned their faces, alight with love and admiration, ceasing from speech to watch her approach. With a pleasant imperiousness she took the first word.

“Odinel! Husband! Dearest heart! This day I give myself again to you. Nathaniel, this day I thank God again for your birth; and for my wedding token to you, Odinel, and for my birth token to you, Nathaniel, I have one true gift, — my heart’s welcome to the girl Nathaniel loves. She shall be to you and me, Odinel, as a dear daughter; and I surely believe she will be to you, Nathaniel, a true and loving wife.”

It was a supreme sacrifice and a supreme thanksgiving under the drooping larch branches. A few words sprang hot from each heart, and Nathaniel kissed the happy tears off his mother’s eyelids, and Lady Kelder kissed them off her husband’s and her son’s. Somehow the white late flowers were in her hand, and her hand was on her husband’s arm, and Nathaniel, radiant and smiling, was walking at her side.

And she was not a woman to retract a tittle of her gift. On the contrary, she entered into Nathaniel’s plans with a generous detail. She wrote a letter of welcome to Olivia, and stinted no word of her loving right as an adopted daughter of her house. She packed Nathaniel’s clothing, and gave him wise and practical advice as to his marriage; and she sent a swift messenger to Hannah Mettelane to inform her of Nathaniel’s intentions, and bring back such letters as she desired to send. And when, on the second morning afterward, Nathaniel left Kelderby for his long journey, she bravely kept her cheerful heart to the last moment, and sent him away with her love and blessing.

Perhaps she had some doubtful and unhappy moments in the solitude of her room, but not even Jael knew of them. For to Jael she had accepted Olivia as her future daughter with such a complete ignoring of her former dislike as forbade any allusion to it.

“My son goes to America to bring home Mistress Prideaux as his wife,” she said with a calm complaisance. “’T is a good marriage, and a great content to the baron and myself. And as ’t is the first marriage in Kelderby in forty years, we will bring home the bride with songs and garlands and a great feast. That is but right, I think.” And Jael looked at her placid face, and accepted the situation without remark or demur. For in its haughty reticence it said as plainly as possible: “I have changed my opinions. I choose to forget. I choose to accept what I once rejected, and I will suffer no remarks on my conduct.”

In the mean time Olivia was quite unconscious of the joy hastening to meet her. Her mind, open and thoughtful as silence, had long ago admitted that there never yet was gain without some loss in it. She had not found the wilderness free from bewildering human mysteries and agonies, and her needs there had often been as close and urgent, and heaven and help apparently as far off, as ever she had found them in the crowded habitations of men. Life came to her uncalled for, and from every point; and she was touched and moved by influences flowing in, she knew not how or whence.

Nothing had happened just as Roger had planned. His proposed settlement had been broken up by circumstances no human foresight could have prevented; and instead of “settling,” the way had been opened for travel and preaching in a remarkable manner. It was more than a year after touching American soil before he had a house of his own; and then every room in it, excepting the one built especially for Olivia, was a “prophet’s room,” and “Prideaux’s” soon became known as a resting-place and a gathering-place for all Friends passing to and fro on religious journeys.

So, then, the solitude and quiet which Olivia had anticipated were not realized. The house was never empty of guests: there were many meetings and discussions, and people coming and going; and even if she went far into the woods for meditation, she was not sure but others of like mind would meet her there.

One morning early in November this perpetuity of companionship fretted her calm soul to the verge of tears. She could not help wondering if there would not be, among the hills of God, "coverts" where "rest in the Lord" could not be broken in upon. She knew there was an inward peace which could consume like a fire all murmur of discontent, but she could not reach it while Anna Copeland was telling Rachel Sanderson of her great deliverances, and Roger and three men Friends were sitting together for directions.

Yet she blamed herself for her inability; she believed her weakness grew out of vain longings, and thoughts which were so sacredly personal that she could share them with no earthly being. For never had the memories of the past haunted her so vividly and so persistently. She had not been able to listen to Anna Copeland for the sound of the bees in the clover fields round Mettelane, and from Mettelane to Sandys and Kelderby how swift was the soul-flight!

It was an exquisite day, full of that still serenity which precedes the advent of winter. The sun was pale, the air subtle. The trees had suffered their yearly enchantment, and now and then they talked soughfully among themselves, in soft murmurs, with long silences between. She sat down under a large maple, and at first her gaze was full of that total indifference which comes from sheer weariness; perhaps also from some disappointment, as if she had looked at her ideals too closely, — a fatal mistake in life.

She appeared a little older, but still had that virginal beauty of promise which sets "the budding rose above the rose full blown;" and as she sat musing under the great vault of bare branches it was difficult to say what of the unknown and unseen was in her lonely simplicity.

She was thinking of Nathaniel; recalling his nobility of nature, the eager tenderness of his wooing, the sorrowful atmosphere in which their love had grown. Often she had thus thought of him, until the sense of his presence had been so sure and so sweet that she had lifted her eyes to see if he were not coming, and listening intently had thought she heard his voice calling her. For the ear has its own memory. It watches for an accustomed sound, and sometimes imagination will not let it be disappointed.

This morning, when the same sense of nearness made her heart beat and her face flame with hope, she did not raise her head. Movement would break the spell; she would hold it breathless, and save the influence to the last moment. But it did not fade away; it grew stronger. There was a strange stir among the fallen leaves; a familiar sound of quick, even steps; a low, intense voice calling her; some one coming nearer, nearer, — some one different from all others, infinitely dearer and closer.

She stood up and cast her eyes down the narrow path. There could be no mistake. The tall, erect figure, the clear, happy face, searching the woods as it came onward, were the figure and the face of Nathaniel Kelder. She went swiftly to meet him. She answered his call with a whisper on his lips.

Nathaniel could have come at no more favourable moment. Her heart had been pleading for him longer than she knew; for it had learned many things in exile that she had not intended it to learn. Among these things

was the conviction that God was not more easily found in solitude than in the stress of daily life; that the soul makes her own peace quite as often in the strife of cities as in the loneliness of the woods; that in loving and doing and suffering it is possible to be closer to the Divinity than in simple meditation.

These convictions, so easily stated, had been arrived at only through disappointment and sorrow; and they were not explained to Nathaniel without sweet delays and mutual confessions and experiences. When they returned to the house Roger was sitting alone at his door. He was greatly changed. The pious, kindly master of Sandys had become an enthusiast and evangelist, — rugged, muscular, sunbrowned, and though spotlessly neat, dressed in the plainest materials. His eyes kindled when he took Nathaniel's hand, and then he looked at Olivia with inexpressible love and resignation.

“Thou art come for Olivia?”

“Yea, Roger. Deny me no longer, I entreat you.”

“I cannot deny thee what God hast given thee. For the last month I have felt an evidence that the Lord would break my last tie. Henceforward I am only his. He can send me through the wilderness, or to the lands far off. What news for the Lord's people hast thou brought?”

“I have brought news full of hope and comfort. Edward Burrough has made all the sufferings of the American Friends known to King Charles.”

“Will he care for them, Nathaniel? Nay, for his heart is wholly set on the pleasures of this world.”

“He cares for his own authority, which the Massachusetts Colony have held in contempt.”

“In what special?”

“Some Friend, denied all show of justice in Boston,

appealed to the laws of England ; and Denison mockingly bade him do so, saying, ' This year ye will go to complain to the Parliament, and the next year they will send to see how it is, and the third year the government is changed.' And when the king read these words he called his courtiers round him and with great significance said, ' Lo, these are my good subjects in New England ; but I will put a stop to them.' "

" Ah ! His own rights being in question."

" Then Edward Burrough spoke boldly before Charles, and showed him what a vein of innocent blood had been opened in his dominions ; and the king angrily cried, ' I will stop that vein.' ' Then do it speedily, O King ! ' answered Burrough. ' As speedily as you will. Call the secretary, and I will do it now,' said Charles. And so there and then he wrote to John Endecott, and to all and every other governor of plantations in New England, that they should cease to punish or even judge Quakers ; but that if they did aught worthy of trial, they should be sent to London for judgment."

" When it pleases God, kings shall plead for us."

" Also the king's message was sent to Governor Endecott by the hand of Samuel Shattuck."

" Friend Samuel Shattuck ! "

" Yea, the despised Quaker, driven from his home by Boston priests, goes back as the representative of their sovereign, carrying with him a crushing token of the royal anger. I see not how Endecott will endure it. My father knew him once, and thought well of him."

" In some things I also think well of him. He has taught the little settlements the wisdom of unity, and brought over many good men by his good government."

" But he is a bigot, or he had not cut from the flag the sign of his salvation."

“’T was, I think, a deed of passion against a foreign power anxious to recall the charter of New England and establish episcopacy. For truly, with the carefulness of a crusader, he wears always the sacred symbol clearly marked in the form of his beard, — a perpetual witness, Nathaniel. And he is such a man as will not bear opposition, and the priests set him on fire through his prejudices.”

“’T is the great mystery of our religion, this tyranny and brutality of the priesthood.”

“Nay, ’t is no mystery, Nathaniel. The influence of priests rests upon the idea that they are endowed with attributes denied to common men; that they only can interpret God’s word and declare his will. But our God speaks not in riddling oracles, and why should he want an interpreter between himself and the soul which came forth from him? Nor are these priests in any way better than we be. No extra sense is given them for the great place they usurp. They have a full tale of mortal frailties. They are sick as other men are, and death comes to them with no special reverence. Then thou must see that if men listen to the voice of God within them the voice of the priest must fail, and the power of the ministers will be broken. They are their own Diana; and they would persecute Paul, or Peter, or Christ himself, if they preached anything by which their craft was in danger to be set at naught. Dost thou wonder, then, that Friends are hated by them? That John Wilson, priest in Boston, should scream out in his pulpit, ‘I would carry fire in one hand and fagots in the other, and burn all the Quakers in the world.’ That John Higginson, another priest, should preach, ‘The Inner Light is a stinking vapour from nell.’ That John Rayner, a priest of Dover, should stand laughing for joy to see Mary Tomkins and Alice Ambrose

flogged through the town on a freezing day for saying 'the Inner Light was none other but Christ, who lighteth every man that cometh into the world.' "

"Oh! I wonder men with English blood in them suffered such things in their sight and hearing."

"They did not. The priests gloried in stripes and torture, but the people cut the bleeding women from the cart which dragged them, and saved them from an awful death. Priest Norton sneered and mocked at the agonies of William Brend, but the people of Boston succoured the victim of one hundred and seventeen lashes as he lay senseless on the floor of his dark cell. Charles Chauncy, preaching, told his congregation, since 'they could not have the blood of the Southwicks by law, to kill them like wolves.' Oh, and much more I could add, Nathaniel; for priests have ever exhausted human torments in slaying those who rebelled against the enslavement of their own souls."

"We are free men, Roger."

"Not if our noblest part is in thrall to a man-made priesthood. But I can see the day surely coming when men, having full liberty of thought and speech and worship, shall reverence the names of those despised Quakers."

"Yea, Roger; and great as are the givers of political freedom, the men who have wrestled for us with the powers of darkness for spiritual freedom will be the heroes who shall have the world's eternal gratitude."

"And then, Nathaniel, truly these men, who are now thought to be nobodies, who are dead and buried, shall have their lives searched, and their memory shall be hallowed forever."

He ceased suddenly, with the glow of this anticipated triumph lighting up his rugged face, and kindling his

dreamy, wistful eyes into a flame of rapturous prediction. Then there was silence for a few minutes, and Nathaniel, with a heart full of happiness, watched Olivia setting out the service for the midday meal, and going in and out about her household duties with the same serene grace and dignity that had made her so charming as mistress of Sandys. Indeed this beloved interest had been so present that Roger's passionate arraignment and prophetic justification had not touched Nathaniel as they might have done. In his own happiness it was so difficult to be sorrowful for the misery of others; in the joy of the present hour he did not feel much the satisfaction of some far-off victory over wrong.

It cost him a slight effort to say, "King Charles has also been kind to the Friends in England. Many are out of prison, and they have a sort of right to speak for themselves. A few days before I left, John Duttred met a Friend in open argument in Kendal town-hall."

Roger lifted his face to Nathaniel's, and there was a fine pity on it as he answered, —

"With such clumsy tools as arguments and logic, men only fumble at the lock of the spiritual world. I tell thee, Nathaniel, that if thou desirest truth, seek it by listening to the voice of God in thy soul. Divine faith and love come not through the reason or the intellect; they are a divine work in the soul.

"Who that one moment hath the least descried Him,
Dimly and faintly, hidden and afar,
Doth not despise all excellence beside Him?
Pleasures and powers that are not, and that are?"

"Yea; if we had all vision, Roger."

"Vision in the spiritual world is like vision in the natural world,—of no use unless there is light. Be

more inward with thy God, Nathaniel. If thou canst commune with thy own spirit, canst thou not also commune with the Spirit of God which is within thee? A poor man, a poor man indeed, is he who has not been far beyond arguments and logic in spiritual matters."

"You go deep and high, yet I presume not to limit."

"Who can limit the experiences of a soul bared to all the influences of God's special revelations? It is impossible to say what the Lord Jesus Christ will do for those willing to live through him as he lives through the Father."

"As regards this world, Roger, nothing has happened as you expected?"

"The plans I made failed, for God had better ones. I thought to do so and so, but from which things I have been hindered and withholden by that Hand which is my guide and helper."

Spiritual things had become so much Roger's life that it was not until the close of the day that he remembered certain worldly affairs would have to be attended to in regard to his daughter's marriage. "Thou wilt have to take thy wife without money, Nathaniel; I have spent much and I shall spend all in the cause of truth. For this reason God blessed me in my business, and when I would have sat down in fair Sandys he tore my nest to pieces and said unto me, 'Go east and west and preach a free and everlasting gospel.'"

"I want neither gold nor silver. I want only Olivia."

"My sister Hannah is indeed rich, and in the way of probabilities —"

"We will not speak of them."

"Thou wilt be a kind husband to her?"

"I promise it."

Roger's eyes were full of tears, and Olivia coming into

the room quickly noticed his emotion. She went to him, and laying her cheek against his cheek, said, —

“Father, if thou art sorrowful, where then is our joy?”

“Though I drop tears, think not that I am left comfortless. The same goodness that was my morning light is now my evening song. I have an apprehension of duty to visit the West Indies. When thou art gone away with Nathaniel I shall go there.”

“’Tis a long way, Father.”

“Far or near, every way is the way home. I have often gone through the wilderness hungry and thirsty and weary as to the flesh, but so upheld by His Spirit that I felt as if my feet took no hold on the ground.”

Then he rose and went out to some Friends sitting in the shade of a great tree, but his smile was a benediction as he left the lovers together.

XXI.

KELDERBY AND SANDYS.

“She surpassed
All of her own age in beauty and mind,
Therefore the noblest man of wide Troy married her.”

“After Sorrow’s night
Dawned the morning bright;
In dewy woods I heard
A golden-throated bird,
And ‘Love, love, love,’ it sang,
And ‘Love, love, love.’”

AS Nathaniel wished to return by the same ship that brought him to America, it was necessary to hasten the arrangements for his marriage with Olivia. But these were of the simplest description, for both Puritans and Friends alike regarded the marriage covenant as one of too solemn and significant a character to be consummated with laughter and merry-making.

The weather was singularly beautiful. The late Indian summer lingered for the lovers’ joy. They spent hours together in the still forest, conscious of the serene sky above them and of the woody fragrance which their soft, slow feet pressed from out the fallen leaves, as anew and anew they told their hearts to each other, in words old as Paradise, yet young and fresh as to-day’s poet sings them.

“I love you, sweet! How can you ever learn how much I love you?”

“Thee I love even so, and so I learn it.”

“Sweet, you cannot know how fair you are.”

“If fair enough to earn thy love, so much is all my love’s concern.”

“My love grows hourly, sweet.”

“Mine too doth grow, yet love seemed full so many hours ago.”

“Ah! happy they to whom such words as these
In youth have served for speech the whole day long,
Hour after hour remote from the world’s throng;
Work, contest, fame, all life’s confederate pleas,
What while Love breathed in sighs and silences,
Through two blent souls, one rapturous under-song.”

But at length the sweet, short interval was over. The ship was ready to sail with the evening tide, and in the morning about twenty Friends gathered at “Prideaux’s” to witness the troth-plinghting. The Countess Mordee was among them. On the day previous she had brought to Olivia a present of some exquisite lace of Brussels, and remained to assist her in its arrangement upon the white lawn which was to be the wedding garment.

So that Nathaniel did not take his bride without some of the insignia of the wonderful event. Fairies might have woven the delicate, transpicuous tissue of flowers of finest thread which gave to her simple robe the effect of lace-like gossamer. A veil of the same illusive beauty fell across her bright brown hair. A Bible bound in silver — also the gift of the motherly countess — was in her hand. “Look now, Olivia,” she said; “it was the gift of a very good man. It was my own wedding book, and upon it I have asked for thyself and thy husband the marriage blessing desired by the young Hebrew bridegroom, — ‘Mercifully ordain that we may grow old together.’” And tears of fond remembrance filled her eyes: she looked backward nearly fifty years to see her

own bridal, and then, mid-way life, the green grave of her companion.

At sunset the hour of parting came, but it was not a parting without hope. Roger had such a confidence in the love of God that he believed he would sometime send him by way of England, and thus permit him to see his daughter's happiness in her own home and native land. A few natural tears were shed, and then Nathaniel and Olivia looked together into their future with the gladness of those who have no self-reproaches.

In about ten weeks they were in London ; and a few hours after their arrival Nathaniel, walking on the Strand, met Baron Strickland and his bride.

"I count this a fortunate meeting," said the young noble, "for I assure you it is full time you kissed the king's hand. If your friends had not been as ready to make excuses as your enemies were to make complaints, I surely think ere this the Kelders would have lost Kelderby."

"It is your kindness I must honour, Strickland, and your advice goes well with my own intentions."

"I shall see the king to-night. Let me ask for an audience for you."

"You will do me a great service if you do."

"I will bring you word to-morrow. If his Majesty receives your visit and accepts your allegiance, it puts you out of all fear."

The friendship intended by this offer was gratefully accepted, and the following day Strickland brought a favourable answer. The evening named, however, would occasion a delay in London of nearly two weeks.

"A fortunate delay," said Strickland. "It will permit you to provide a suitable dress. And let me assure you that the king is a great observer of such matters."

This was good news to accompany the letters to Kelderby and Mettelane, and the messenger was urged to make all possible speed. In both homes he was expected and watched for. Love is a close calculator, and the possibility of his arrival had been surmised for some days.

The winter hitherto had been an open one, but there was every sign of an approaching storm. With anxious hearts the baron and Lady Kelder watched it coming. The distant hills were already turbaned with great bands of snow; the bleak, leafless garden was still and sad under the lowering, threatening clouds; the dull sky was fast darkening down to the edges of the dull sea. The baron walked thoughtfully about the room; Lady Kelder had her "Book of Religious Meditations" upon her knee, but her own meditations were far closer to her sympathies. Then came the sharp shower of sonorous hail, and after it the soft, thick flakes of the mesmerizing snow. While the storm lasted day to day must be so like, — so very like.

The baron sat hopelessly down, and with Lady Kelder began to count again the weeks of Nathaniel's absence, and to persuade themselves it was really foolish to expect his arrival for some indefinite time. While they were thus engaged Jael entered, and with suppressed excitement said, —

"Here be a gentlemanly make of a man from London, — from the young master. All is well, my Lady, — well as can be; nothing but prosperation, as I can hear of; and God bless us all!"

"Bring him here at once, Jael. Why not?"

"My Lady, he is beat out, and is having a few oddments of meat and bread. He left Kendal at strike of day, and has had a fight to get in with the storm."

The storm now meant little to Kelderby. Nathaniel was in London with his wife. Nathaniel was going to court with her, and in that event it was likely the weary suspense they had so long endured would be over. Every one was so greatly excited that Lady Kelder could not avoid a little scornful criticism on the mood.

“I vow, they are as set up with the coming of the bride as if it were her Majesty; but, God knows, it is the feasting they look for that moves them so. Quaker or queen will do for an occasion.”

“Is feasting a necessity, Joan?”

“Let me tell you, Odel, if we make not some show of company our neighbours will say the bride is not to our liking. And matters being as they are, the bride is very much to our liking,—as far as the general public are concerned.”

“I think, dear, that privately also we shall soon enjoy the same opinion.”

“Odel, what say you? Shall we ask Mistress Mettelane to meet her niece here?”

“It is a kind thought, Joan; 't is most like you. There is no holdback in your grace.”

The praise was pleasant to her, and she smiled with a happy complaisance as she added, “I have a mind now to take, with Olivia, all that belongs to her.”

“Mistress Mettelane is a good woman, and well spoken of. She is rich, also, and it may be —”

“If she be rich, that is a cloak big enough to cover all her faults. But in truth, Odel, I thought not of her riches. I am sure that some will want to talk to me about Olivia as if they disparaged Nathaniel's wife, and I shall not let slip such occasions to say, ‘Here is also my daughter's aunt, Mistress Mettelane, and a very dear friend of mine.’ If all others are silent, be sure Mistress Duttred

will push in Olivia's Quakerism. She will find ways and means to bring in that discourse, though it be by head and shoulders; and it is most like to be in a manner of pleasing me by praising me. 'T is a great trial as ever any poor lady had, and you have a large charity,' and the like words; and I shall say, 'Mistress Duttred, there is greater charity in the Word than you and I have yet found out, and 't was there I got the warrant, not only to love my neighbour, but to judge her not.' Oh, I assure you, Odelnel, that if our friends will flout at either they shall be forced to their ill-nature without a veil of my finding."

When the storm was over the proposed invitation was sent to Mistress Mettelane, and the preparations for Nathaniel and his bride commenced. Concerning them Lady Kelder was almost hypersensitive. The finest wing in the house was chosen for their occupancy, and she took a careful pleasure in making everything in it fit her own exact and rigorous ideas of what was included in her promise to accept Olivia as her daughter.

Yet alone she had moments of bitterest sorrow, and she did not look forward to the consummation of her personal sacrifice without many mournful reflections.

"I shall never feel the same again. Kelderby will never be the same: a strange woman going about the house, — always there, morning, noon, and night; how can I bear it? I have been chief and only here; now I shall have to endure the homage given to this superexcelling creature. I shall even be obliged to add my pinch of incense to the general oblation burnt in her honour. 'T is a hard case, indeed, to have to change all when life is so near its close. Well, then, it is perhaps the loosing of the link which is to scatter the whole chain. God help me! He only knows how much easier it is to

make a fine resolution than to work it out hour by hour, and day by day."

There were a few tears in her eyes, — the tears of age are cold and few. Once her heartache would have been washed away in a warm and plenteous rain, leaving life calm and clear-skyed after it; now such clarifying storms were almost impossible to her.

She was taking from her dower chests scented linen and fine tapestry hangings, and the act was a tangible translation of the sacredness of her promise. Was it made less precious by the heavy solitary drops that sealed its honesty of purpose? Alas, no! the sorrows of the aged must count for double. Their sense of loss looks for no redemption from the morrow.

The baron never guessed how hard a discipline his wife was bearing, or he would have made it lighter by a constant loving sympathy; and the household mainly believed her to be thoroughly enjoying the coming change. Jael, however, knew precisely how her lady carried the cup she had to drink; for to Jael Lady Kelder made few pretences of any kind; and having once signified her resolution to receive Nathaniel's wife publicly with honourable welcome, she permitted herself privately that sincerity of speech which she knew Jael would respect.

It was some gratification also to point out her self-denial; even Jael's approval was pleasant. It was indeed the only human approval she could expect, and there are few hearts whom the Divinity quite satisfies.

"If my son were bringing me a daughter worthy of my utmost honour, could I do more, Jael? I intend Nathaniel's wife to have all her due, Jael."

"My Lady, you have been generous beyond all, — the best room, the newest furniture, a maid hired for my

young lady's own use. If you could only give her a little love — ”

“ Love is not bought in the market-place, Jael. I try to be considerate. Is not Mistress Mettelane asked to meet her niece? At any hour now I may have to entertain her; and she is quite my inferior, and a church-woman as well. I know little about church-women.”

“ They aim to be about right, I should say, my Lady. And as we begin to age we can give our hearts a bit of favour, and leave the young ones to see that things are kept straight. Mistress Mettelane wrote you a very proper letter. I never heard tell of a properer one. I could not help thinking that it was well such a good one had had the bringing up of Master Nathaniel's wife. She's well come of, I'll warrant.”

She is a statesman's¹ daughter, and some of these statesmen have coats-of-arms older than a crusader. I don't know about the Mettelanes'.”

“ We may as well hope they are pretty old. But this or that, she has plenty of the 'wherewith;' and it is little matter, my Lady, whether gold be old or freshly minted.”

“ If the girl were not a Quakeress.”

“ My Lady, a rose is a rose wherever it grows.”

“ But differences in roses, Jael, — hedge roses and garden roses. You cannot pin a woman with a proverb. And if you don't want roses of any kind, what then, Jael? I have shed more tears lately than I thought ever to shed again.”

“ If your heart is full, weep, my Lady; 't is the unshed tears that are never wiped away.”

Such conversations had their use; for to do kind deeds, and then take in private a little grumble about their necessity, is the condition making much public

¹ A landowner.

virtue possible ; and many a trouble comes with a blessing in its hand. When Hannah Mettelane arrived, the hospitable instincts of Lady Kelder led her to give a welcome whose kindness left nothing to desire, and every moment afterward the two women drew closer together.

On the third evening of her visit, they were going together through the rooms which had been put in such beautiful order for the coming bride. Hannah Mettelane walked between the baron and Lady Kelder ; and having admired and suggested until the subject was exhausted, they sat down before the blazing fire which was already brightening Nathaniel's private parlour.

Hannah had become very quiet. Her heart was busy, and her large, intelligent eyes moved with a slow speculation between her companions.

"You have made a home beyond everything for the children," she said ; "and I know about what it costs. I mean in love, and in other feelings mayhap still more unselfish. I could n't have done it. I like my house to myself, and I had my little plan about the children. You see, I thought of Sandys."

"Sandys !" said the baron. "I thought your brother sold Sandys."

"He sold it to me. I thought it a pity to let such a fine bit of land go out of the family. Indeed, after Cromwell's death it would have been hard for Roger to get any one to look at the title he could give ; and many thought in the general turn-up at the king's homecoming the heir-at-law would be found."

"I think myself it was a great risk to take."

"But, counting all these risks, I got Sandys for a little price, though 't was money enough for the unlikely things driving my brother to strange lands. Then by

using such friends as I had claim upon, I made haste to certify my right; and looking forward always to the marriage of my niece with your son, I have kept the place in such order as its worth asked for."

"Indeed, such order as constantly raised the wonder of all."

"So you see" — and she spoke slowly, with her eyes dropped, and a happy smile lighting her large, calm face — "it is ready for its owners. For if Olivia married the heir of Kelderby, Nathaniel Kelder married the mistress of Sandys. A week ago I made it over, house and land, silver and furnishings of every kind, to Olivia Kelder; and may God bless the house forever!"

"Mistress Mettelane, this is indeed great news," said the baron, "and we cannot but take it well of you. 'T is a noble home, indeed it is."

"And, as I thought, near to Kelder, and not far away from Mettelane. In my homé, also, there shall be rooms made ready for the children's visit; but I know right surely that age dwells not happily with youth, and that youth soon grows sad with age."

"Think you so?"

"In truth I do. Age is the chapel of life. When we sit down in its quiet, the busy cares and pleasures of youth come into it like an offence. I know it is well for all that Nathaniel and Olivia should have their own home. I hope that it may be Sandys."

"They could have no fairer or finer one," said Lady Kelder, softly. Her eyes were full of tears, and she drew her chair nearer to Hannah's and took her large, capable hand within the clasp of her own small ones. A kind intelligence that needed no speech passed from face to face. From that moment they were true friends.

"The silver and linen, the crystal and the fine pewter

service, with the curious ornaments I have had at Mettelane, — they left Ambleside in Stephen Airey's wagon, and must now be at Sandys. If you, my Lady, will go over there with me, we can see to their unpacking and safe bestowal. I should n't wonder if all the old servants are already there. The women have worked on D'Acre's land, one way or another, since Sandys shut; and I called on Jane D'Acre as I passed, and she was crying happy at my news, and D'Acre said Olivia's old women should all be loosed from his claim and go back to Sandys. The D'Acres will be good friends, I trow."

"If they get not cool or hot on their religion," said Lady Kelder, scornfully. "As for me, I think D'Acre a fair-weather friend."

"I heard that he stood not trial. But, dear me! we must n't ask friends to think as we do. 'Tis too much, and beyond all. If souls were all made on one pattern, then possible, perhaps; but, God knows, souls differ as much as faces, — not two alike. What then, Baron?"

"Charity, Mistress Mettelane. If we could only love each other half as well as God loves us all."

"Not being God, we could n't do it, Baron," said Lady Kelder; "and God knows that there are some people God himself could n't love, — no, not even for Christ's sake. Let us not talk of them. 'Tis better to go to bed and sleep on the good fortune Mistress Mettelane has brought us; for, if she will, we shall take the road for Sandys very early in the morning."

Her face shone with pleasure and kindness as she rose, and in the noble, smiling inclination of her head to Hannah Mettelane she expressed a grateful happiness that delighted the simple, truthful woman. And that night Lady Kelder was conscious of a gratitude that humbled and silenced her. Had she not been grudging Olivia a

few rooms in Kelderby, and lo! the stately home of Sandys was waiting for her? Had she not been fretting at the introduction of a new element into her life, when too old to desire it, and there had never been any foundation for the fear except in her own heart?

"It was not necessary to God's goodness," she said sadly. "Wanting to bless Nathaniel and Olivia, he has done it without my help." Tears filled her eyes and she murmured, "I tried hard, indeed I did! If God had only understood —" The Baron entered at the moment, and she voiced her heartache to him.

"Indeed, dear heart, I think God did understand. He saw you wished to be unselfish, and he said, 'It is enough. That will do.' Think you he did not understand how precious the quiet of Kelderby was to both of us? Joan, our God is such a one as cares for our little likings, and is heedful of our daily happiness."

"How provoking kings are! Charles might have seen Nathaniel on the asking. Then he would have been home ere this."

"Never hurry your happiness, Joan. And I think it was not the king's fault, but Strickland's kindness. Doubtless he thought of such an important matter as court dresses, and in that respect sought time for the children."

The delay in London, however, had not been a profitless or unpleasant one to Nathaniel and Olivia. During it their friendship with the Stricklands had been placed upon a lasting basis; for each had discovered many personal sympathies besides such as sprung from the similarity of their domestic and social condition and their identity of interests as future neighbours.

At length the evening appointed for their interview with the king arrived, and they went together to Whitehall,

making a sufficiently remarkable group both individually and by way of contrast. Marmaduke Strickland, representing one of the oldest families in England, and a passionate royalist in sentiment, was arrayed in all the splendor of the Stuart fashions; but so lofty was his stature and so imposing his manner, that he carried with a certain fitness of courtly manhood the long, flowing curls and flaunting finery of his order. His beautiful young wife wore her bride-dress of gold brocade, and its jewelled bodice and long train were but the suitable accompaniments of the gems which glittered in her hair, and lay on her bosom, and clasped her bare arms.

Behind so noticeable a couple Nathaniel and Olivia were still more noticeable; for Nathaniel's suit of Genoa velvet and Genoa point was made with Puritan simplicity, and Olivia's dress of soft white satin was without a single jewel. Its only ornament was the large collar of Brussels lace which covered her throat and her bosom, and the cuffs of the same material, which were turned back over the long satin sleeves almost to the elbows. But the glistening of her garments, the radiant serenity of her face, and her starry eyes, gave her a singular charm. She appeared to shine where she stood. And the easy grace and confidence of her manner were a wonder even to her companions; for none at that moment reflected that the soul accustomed to contemplate the solemnities of eternity is not to be affected by the gilded show of what is constantly passing away. Yet the scene through which she walked was to her a very strange one, and as far apart from her sympathies and intelligence as the east is from the west.

The large apartments were brilliantly lighted, and the air was heavy with many perfumes and the rich odours of southern wines. Gayly dressed dissolute women and

men were playing basset around a large table, with a terrible eagerness. Their sharp, strained voices and the chink, chink of gold mingled with the notes of a French boy singing love-songs, with laughter half subdued, with the rustle of silken garments and the gurgle of flowing liquors.

The king sat amid a bevy of handsome women, toying with the loosened hair of one who held in her hand a goblet of wine, — everywhere around the god of this world and the great lord of lusts ruling with prodigal wantonness.

But Charles knew how to assume in a moment the attitude belonging to the king of a great people. He stepped majestically forward and won Strickland's heart anew by a greeting at once respectful and familiar, and by the genuine glance of admiration which he bestowed upon his bride. She knelt to kiss the hand he extended, but Charles quickly raised her, and touching her cheek said, "Kings are the servants of beauty." With the words he took a ring from his finger and gave it to her.

Then Strickland introduced Nathaniel Kelder, saying, "He brings to your Majesty a loyal service."

"A recovered loyalty is greatly prized by us," answered Charles. "Some of our subjects do not credit us with much conscience, but we credit conscience to our subjects, — and know how to value it." Then, while offering his hand to Nathaniel, he turned to Olivia.

She was regarding him with an almost childish interest, and he smiled frankly into her innocent face. It seemed to have a great and yet not an offensive attraction to him. He scarcely heard Nathaniel speaking; he was too earnestly trying to comprehend the pure, womanly countenance to heed words, until the name of Prideaux was mentioned. Then he recollected what Strickland had told him of De Burg and Kelder and

the Quaker Prideaux, and he understood the holy eyes, and the face upon which the dove visibly brooded, and the ravishing simplicity of manner and dress. His glance went from Olivia to Nathaniel, and he regarded both with great favour.

“I think, Mistress Kelder, that the king has in you a loyal subject.”

“Yea; for thou hast been kind to many suffering wrongfully. In the day when all need mercy, may God give thee mercy.”

“Be it so.”

“I offer thee neither lip service nor knee worship, but my heart hath none the less truth and honour.” Then perceiving him about to unfasten a jewelled clasp of great value, she said, modestly, —

“Give me the rose thou wearest, and I will keep it for a token of thy kindness to me and to my people.”

Instantly Charles understood her. He had been on the point of making her a much richer present than the one given to the wife of his faithful adherent, — a present also which her principles forbade her to wear. But that wisdom which springs from an unselfish heart had prevented a gift likely to bring unkindness and embarrassment, and it was with a sentiment of grateful admiration that he took the rose from his jewelled vest and gave it to her.

An act of such evident favour at once attracted attention. Indeed, it was impossible, in that company, for Olivia to escape a critical regard. The gift of the rose was to many who understood none of its motives, a gift suggestive of the evil in their hearts. “The king is freshly smitten; ’t is a love gift,” was the universal comment.

One woman, however, was not so deceived. She saw

in it the expression of a respect which Charles believed very few men or women deserved. It was Mistress Chenage. She was with the players at the basset table ; and though a bank of at least two thousand pounds in gold lay before her, she was thinking only of the king's rose.

At first when she saw Nathaniel and Olivia, with the Stricklands, enter the royal presence, she had wisely determined to be indifferent to them. But the exclamations about Olivia's beauty, her angelic face, her charming simplicity, had been gradually growing more frequent and emphatic, and more difficult for her to endure. The gift of the rose, attended by a general murmur of pleasure and admiration, roused her to that pitch of jealous envy which demands the relief of offensive speech.

As the Kelders retired from the audience she was conscious of their every footstep. The closer to her they came the more imperative and insolent her temper grew. She turned with the cards fan-shaped in her hand, and watched with her old mockery the approach of the party. Her beautiful face was flushed with wine and anger ; her dark hair, combed back from her forehead, fell in heavy curls over her shoulders, and mingled with the pearls that clasped her slender throat and the lace which affected to cover her bosom. A dress of pink brocade and silver threads clung to her form with seductive grace ; and she flung its heavy folds aside to display her little feet, shod in pink and silver shoes, as she rose from the table and stood directly in the way of the retiring visitors. Strickland was first. She made him a sweeping courtesy and suffered him and his bride to pass ; then, in a challenging voice, she said, —

“Cousin Nathaniel, be not in such a hurry to hide your Quaker wife. Come here, Saint Olivia. If you

kiss me, I vow to show you how to cheat the Devil at a game of basset."

"If thou playest with the Devil in any wise thou wilt lose thy soul. And what gain will profit thee for that loss?" Nathaniel could feel his wife's inward tremor as she spoke, but outwardly she was calm as a lily motionless in the moonlight; and with a stern courtesy he said, "We are in the king's presence, Cousin Chenage. You shall show your anger to me at a more fitting time."

"How wise are we grown! How strangely loyal! How beyond all comparison excellent! Here, boy, I will give you a song for this great and grand monseigneur, —

"Que son mérite est extrême!
Que de grâces! Que de grandeur!
Ah! combien monseigneur
Doit être content de lui-même."

This little episode had not occupied more time than the ordinary salutation of friends would have done, but it had made a much more pronounced impression. The hurry of the beautiful Mistress Chenage, her rapid speech, the excitement which made her forget the cards in her hands and led her to intercept the king's special visitors, gave to the interruption a marked character. A swift intelligence of its spirit passed through the great hall; the players held their next throw in suspense, the singing boy was humming at Anastasia's elbow, "Que de grâces! Que de grandeur!" and the woman who was leaning against the king's shoulder said, —

"Sire, Chenage hath a temper again. A bride or a beauty is a red flag to her."

Charles laughed with scornful good nature. "On my honour! 't was a red rose that bred the present tem-

per ;” and the king’s wit raised the laugh which Anastasia felt she paid for.

Her game was every way lost. While she was turning Nathaniel’s virtues into a ridiculous rhyme, he had passed quietly out of her presence. Her anger had missed its mark, and she was equally unsuccessful in her play. She lost heavily, she provoked the temper of her companions, she had evidently offended her genius by taking revenge into her own hands. Never had she felt so utterly foiled and humiliated.

She went to her lodgings in a fever. “The king openly forsoothed me,” she cried passionately, as she tore off her robe of pink damask and the pearls from her neck and wrists. She looked at her long white arms, they were exquisitely formed ; she looked at her white throat and bosom, no woman in the presence was lovelier than herself. But the king had “forsoothed” her ; treated even her passion as matter for laughter. She held her fair face between her hands and muttered :

“Alack-a-day ! I am but a wretched woman. Everything in life deceives me. Every plan I make fails. My lovers adore and then leave me. My father has so small a sense of what I have done for him that I have the heart-ache for it. Failure is writ all over my life. I wish I had been born good, for the Devil is a cheat of all cheats. I have been mortified beyond all endurance. I have lost more money than even John will like, and my poor head is in a sad taking with the wine. Nathaniel Kelder kissing the king’s hand ! Saint Olivia with the king’s rose at her breast ! Lord, if I swear a little, write me innocent, having such good cause. But I shall tell John to-morrow, and he will curse them all for me !”

For she had not come to London without John. He had a lodging at Greenwich by the seaside, and there he

sat in the sunshine and heard the cries of the sailors and the voice of the ocean once more. "I shall tell John to-morrow. He will find out a way. Lord, how my head aches!" Then she bent herself toward a half-open drawer, and took from it a soiled pack of cards. She shuffled them to and fro a few times, and then, with a slow and vicious hatred, tore them, one by one, to pieces. "You, too, are prophesying liars. A plain undoing you have been to me. What devil is behind you?" So she sat musing until sleep mastered her, and, only half undressed, she threw herself upon the bed.

But in the sinful and tragic events of the last four years she had lost the aptitude for that deep, animal-like sleep which had once made her so cruelly *riant* in her perfect health and perfect spirits. She could not escape the chagrin of her position. The phantasmagoria of the Whitehall, with its gamblers and drinkers, its clinking of gold, and its murmur of song that no one listened to, troubled her consciousness, and made her frequently start with that cry of mortification and that catch in its expression which denotes the extremity of painful vexation. Her lovely flushed face amid the scattered hair of sleep, her white arms flung upward, her white bosom troubled with her restless breathing, showed that her soul, left without excuses, was wandering in those halls of remorseful memory in which the wisest of all sacred seers saw the sleeping wicked vexed.

The unhappy incident did not much disturb either the Stricklands or the Kelders. They went from the palace to Strickland's lodging and talked about it a little, and so rubbed the slight annoyance away. For both felt that they had received that favour which kings give to men whom they delight to honour, and from Nathaniel's heart there had dropped, even at the king's feet, that heavy

load of apprehension concerning his estate which he had so long carried.

It was past midnight when Nathaniel and Olivia reached their own inn. There was a large letter on the table, and Nathaniel saw at a glance that the direction was in his mother's writing. He lifted it with a slight fear of annoyance, but the first words dispelled his anxiety.

FOR MY BELOVED CHILDREN, NATHANIEL AND OLIVIA
KELDER — THESE :

DEAR ONES, — If you will be pleased to know that I wish you with me, 't is a satisfaction you may perpetually have. There is great and good news, and I am so little selfish that I will not keep it for my own delivery, but at once add it to the joy of your bridal. Mistress Mettelane came here two days ago at my own invitation, and never was I more pleased with myself for a kindness; for truly she hath astonished us all with her excellence and her generosity. I had indeed made such preparation for your comfort in Kelderby as our means and the house permitted; but she has far outdone all, having brought with her the vellums securing to you and yours the house and estate of Sandys. And, to be plain-hearted with you, I went there this day, and with Mistress Mettelane put into place all the silver and linen and ornaments which had been taken away for safe keeping, but brought back with such good intent as I cannot but honour and join in. Jane D'Acre was also there, busying herself about filling the posy bowls with holly and wood-berries and house roses, and hanging the pots of sweet musk, which she saith Olivia dearly loveth. So then, if God is willing, you are coming to as fine a home as any in England. But both houses are ready to entertain you; and if you come first to Kelderby, we shall take the daylight with us some bright morning, and father and mother and aunt and neighbours put you safe inside the portals of Seat Sandys. And, as Mistress Mettelane said, may God make your home there until your father and I have seen the twentieth Odinel Kelder of full age and worthy of his name. As you know, I am but a poor

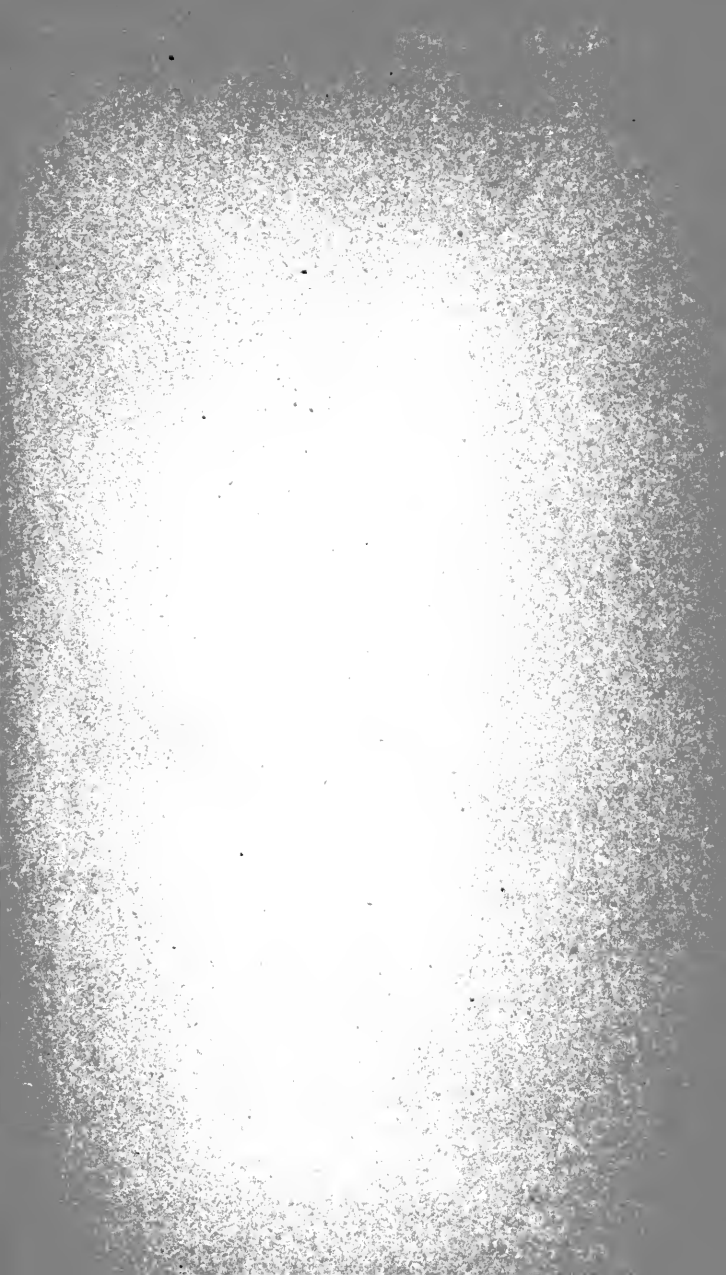
scribe, and I write now in such haste and excitement as cannot satisfy myself, nor express my thoughts as I mean them; and if I did, I should have more to say to you than this paper would hold. Dears, shall we not be very happy? Indeed, I think the promise of it infinitely above what I can deserve, and more than God Almighty usually allots to the very best of people. Pray have a care of your healths. I would fain say more, and yet it would only be saying with more circumstance that I rest to each of you a loving mother.

JOAN KELDER.

They read this letter together twice over; and smiles, and little laughs, and sweet asides, and sweeter kisses interpreted it. And then Nathaniel drew his wife close to his side. For a few moments they made a still picture of wondrous beauty, — Nathaniel's stately figure in the sombre richness of his velvet habit, Olivia's slender form in the pearly splendour of her white satin robe; the masculine beauty of one bending face luminous with love, the feminine beauty of the other lifted face, transfigured, speechless, yet saying things unutterable, — the spiritual woman making sweet the mortal woman.

Nathaniel kissed the words upon her lips, and then, with a sigh of deep content, said softly, "Many blessings are ours, dear heart, and many others are sought for us; but tell me, in thy judgment, which is best of all?" And she laid her cheek against his, and put her arms around his neck, and whispered between her kisses, "Beloved! that we may receive the great grace of our bridal prayer, — 'Mercifully ordain that we may grow old together.'"

THE END.



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