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WHERE SHALL WISDOM BE FOUND?

THE

OBJECT OF LIFE.

A Narrative Illustrating

THE INSUFFICIENCY OF THE WORLD,

AND

THE SUFFICIENCY OF CHRIST.

Live while you live, the Epicure will say,
And seize the pleasures of the present day:
Live while you live, the sacred Preacher cries,
And give to God each moment as it flies.
Lord, in my views let both united be—
I live in pleasure when I live to Thee!

DODDRIDGE.

TWELFTH EDITION.

AMERICAN TRACT SOCIETY,

28 CORNHILL, BOSTON.

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ASTOR, LENOX AND
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1908

EDITOR'S PREFACE.

The following narrative is one of the publications of the (London) Religious Tract Society. It is reprinted with slight alterations from their first edition. It is a beautifully written, touching, and impressive story, eminently evangelical in its sentiments, and overflowing with the unction of a spiritual and earnest piety. Its pictures of life are graphically and truthfully drawn, its characters are delineated with skill, and no one can attentively read it without being profoundly impressed with the conviction that the

largest measure of worldly success is altogether insufficient to satisfy the cravings of the soul, and that nothing but the religion of Christ can render life happy either in prosperity or adversity. It is, therefore, particularly adapted to rebuke the growing worldliness of wealthy professors of religion, though it may be read with interest and profit by persons of all classes and of all ages. D. W.

Illustrations.

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THE OBJECT OF LIFE.

CHAPTER I.

HELME LODGE AND ITS INMATES.

Foolishness is bound in the heart of a child; but the rod of correction shall drive it far from him.—Prov. xxii, 15.

"Solomon said truly," murmured Mr. Croyden, the owner of Helme Lodge, with a sigh, as he sat after dinner in his easy chair, vainly endeavoring to possess himself of the news, while his little daughter gamboled, or, as he described it, "fidgeted" about the room; for among other peculiarities of childhood, she manifested a strong dislike to newspapers as great printed screens, behind which her father was almost hid from her view, every day, about the hour when she was left most at liberty to

enjoy his society; and more than once, before any one had observed the young lady's occupation in time to effect a rescue, the columns containing an important parliamentary debate were twisted into a head-dress for her doll, or cut up to make patches for the harlequin jacket of a mimic sweep on May-day.

Resolved on finding some kind of sympathy and companionship, Miss Mabel opened the door to peep at Fido, who lay on the mat outside, ready for any hint that his presence was desired, when forthwith a sudden rush took place, and the two went in full chase round the table, to the utter confusion of the reader's ideas, and the extreme discomposure of his temper.

This annoyance duly rebuked, and remedied by the banishment of poor Fido, the least guilty of the delinquents, Mabel sought amusement at the window, where presently a large moth, quite out of reach, caught her attention. The desire to capture it was irresistible, and mounting a chair, she sprang at the insect, lost her

balance, clung to the drapery for safety, and finally, amid torn fringes and tassels, and the crash of a broken window, found herself lodged upon the floor.

Fears lest she might be hurt moderated the expression of her father's displeasure, and for a little time after this disaster had been deplored and pardoned, there was a perfect calm; but as Mabel's elastic spirits rose again after the late shock, and her restless gaze wandered round the room in search of new attraction, she espied a book of plates which it suited her fancy to examine at that precise moment, and gravely saying she feared another accident if she attempted to reach it herself, she again disturbed her parent to put it on the table for her.

"Really, Mabel," he said, as he despairingly resumed his seat, "if you cannot behave better, and employ yourself in some quiet and reasonable manner without disturbing other people so continually, you must stay in your room, for I cannot give attention to my paper."

"Then put it by, there's a dear papa, and

talk to me. I have been at books all day, and I want to amuse myself now."

"Have you no work? young ladies always have a work-basket."

"Do they? then I'll have a work-basket—a very pretty one; but there is no occasion for me to work, you know."

"Indeed! Why not, pray?"

"O, because you are rich, and can pay people to do it for me," replied Mabel, laughing.

"Then do you intend to be idle all your life? What are you living for?"

"I am only living now because I can't help it, I suppose," she replied with a serio-comic air.

Mr. Croyden sighed, for this was very much his view of his own case.

"Or, because I hope some day to live to please myself," she added.

"I think you do that already."

"O no, indeed! I have to learn lessons, and obey mademoiselle. To please myself I should just go to sleep and awake an educated lady. That would be happiness."

"Well, I have been thinking you must sometimes want some young companions; so what do you think of going to school? Suppose you just imagine it a dream until you come home again."

"O no, no, papa; do not let us have such a dreadful dream as that." And Mabel's face was for a moment overclouded.

"Then try to be more considerate for my comfort, and think whether you ought not to live a little for me, since I have no one to live for but you."

"Ah, papa! you shall see how delightful I will be when I am a lady. But you know you never do anything but what you choose, and so I wonder why I should. And now, papa, I want to ask you a great favor. I do really often want some young friends, and I wish I might ask Ellen and Esther Severn to come and visit me; may I, papa? I am so very dull."

And having caught a new idea, she persevered in urging it over the top of the newspaper, following up her advantage as she per-

ceived her father somewhat hesitating about his reply.

"Well, well," said he at last, "I will talk to mademoiselle about it."

This was satisfactory; for mademoiselle, she doubted not, would gladly resign her society occasionally in play hours to children whose demeanor she was continually citing as worthy of her imitation; and Mabel skipped out to express her gratification to Fido in the hall.

Mr. Croyden yielded a reluctant consent to the proposal, quite unconscious that the invitation was accepted at the parsonage, not because the intimacy with his spoiled child was desirable, but simply in the hope of conferring a benefit on her; and Miss Mabel rejoiced in an opportunity of playing the hostess to the youthful party, and of astonishing them by her importance, a result which was easily attained.

"Now come with me, and I will show you something very nice," she cried, leading her young guests through a gallery, and pausing at the door of a large room, where her volu-

bility seemed, however, for a moment slightly checked. The shutters were partially closed, casting an air of gloom over a spacious and handsome apartment.

"Is this the way to the observatory?" said Walter Severn, walking forward and opening the shutters.

"O no, this was mamma's room, and it will be mine some day, and everything in it. Just look what handsome things there are."

In a recess stood a bed deeply curtained, and several massive pieces of mahogany furniture were placed round the room.

"These are all full of beautiful ornaments, and furs, and dresses, and all kinds of pretty things, which I am to have when I am old enough. I wonder when 'old enough' will be," added the little girl with a sigh.

"When you have grown up a lady, I should think," said Helen Severn; "but you are not so tall as we are yet."

This was a humbling remark, but as Helen looked admiringly around, it was forgiven.

"You are not used to such rooms as these," said Mabel to her. "Should you not like a great house to live in?"

"No, I don't care about it. Mamma says we should always be contented with what God gives us."

Miss Mabel was turning herself before the glass doors of a large wardrobe. "I like to look at these beautiful doors so much," said she complacently, when a loud, disconcerting laugh broke from Walter Severn.

"You are a rude boy, sir," she angrily exclaimed, with a crimsoned face. "But do not mind him; come, Esther, come and look at yourself;" and she attempted to draw forward a modest-looking child, who seemed disinclined to this kind of entertainment.

"Why have you no long curls like mine, Esther? they would look so pretty," continued Mabel, passing her hand round the head of her visitor, in compassion for the simple neatness of its external adornment.

"Mamma likes this way best," said Esther.

"We did ask her once if we might have long curls like yours," said Helen, "but she said there were two reasons why she would rather not."

"And what were they, I wonder?" exclaimed Mabel, tossing back her head to make the beauty of her ringlets more apparent.

"One was, that it takes a great deal of time to keep them very smooth and nice; and the other, that she has known little girls become very vain and silly about them, and wish to be noticed and admired for things that do not make people any better in reality; and vain children, mamma thinks, often grow up to be foolish and unhappy when they are women."

"Well," replied Mabel, "the time is of no consequence to me, for Janet always curls my hair, and no one has any right to say that I am vain and silly."

Another of Walter's mischievous laughs had very nearly evidenced what some people might nevertheless presume to think; and Mark Leighton, his friend and companion, and Mr.

Severn's pupil, foreseeing the consequences, interposed.

"You have some fine pictures to show us, Miss Croyden," said he; "and then the observatory and telescope which Walter and I are so anxious to see. May we go on now?"

This timely remembrance of her power to confer favors, banished the gathering cloud from Mabel's brow, and she led the way to the hall and dining-room, to point out, not the subjects most likely to interest the young strangers, but those which she believed reflected the greatest honor on her father's pedigree.

"You never saw such pictures as these, I dare say," she exultingly exclaimed. "That one is my grandfather in his court dress; and here is my great-grandmamma, who was lady-in-waiting to the queen. And that is Lord Somebody, I always forget the name: but you see we belong to a noble family. Do you remember the old monument in the church? It is one of papa's ancestors who went to the Crusades. Had you any Crusaders in your family?"

"I hope not," said Walter.

"Why do you hope not, sir?" asked Mabel, in angry surprise.

"Because the pope has no more right to Jerusalem than the pagan," replied Walter, "and all the grand speeches and brave deeds of the Crusaders ended in nothing after all."

"I don't believe you know anything about it," said Mabel, contemptuously.

"But," said Mark, anxious to prevent the saucy reply which was ready on Walter's tongue, "we all know that if the Crusaders had really wished to do good, they should have told the poor infidels about the Lord Jesus Christ, instead of killing as many as came within their reach; and I think with Walter, that one missionary is worth a hundred cross-blazoned Crusaders."

This was too gently said to afford opportunity for angry retort, and being in some doubt whether chivalrous tastes could secure the best of the argument against two boys who seemed to prefer a more matter-of-fact view of events,

Mabel proceeded to recount all she knew of the pictures.

"And have you got one of Bacon, or Newton, or Milton, or anybody really worth admiring?" asked Walter; "because, as we don't know these ladies and gentlemen, I should like the telescope much better."

"I dare say there is a picture of your mamma," suggested Helen.

"Ah, yes, but papa keeps that. It is set round with pearls and diamonds, and I am to have it some day when I am old enough. I wish the time would fly faster, for I am quite tired of waiting so long for all my beautiful things."

"But when you are older you will think it flies too fast, and may wish to stop it, perhaps," said Helen. "We often think the days are too short for all we want to do."

"O no, indeed! I shall take care to have some new pleasure every day, and then, you know, there will always be something to make me wish for to-morrow."

The young visitors looked at each other, not knowing how to converse with their thoughtless little hostess; and while the boys amused themselves in the observatory, the sisters began to watch for the signal of their return home.

When that time arrived, Mabel kissed them affectionately, and promised soon to come and see all their pretty things, which, she was disappointed to learn, consisted chiefly of flowers and books, a cat, and some pet pigeons.

At bedtime, Mabel recounted the events of the day to her talkative waiting-maid, and received unbounded sympathy in all her mortifications.

"For my part, I wonder at their boldness in talking so to you, miss," said Janet; "that Master Walter, that people say is to be so clever, will never be a gentleman, to my thinking; you should have put him down for contradicting you so flat."

"I do not like him at all; he shall never come again," exclaimed Mabel. "But what a pity that Esther's mamma will not allow her to

have long curls. Did you ever hear of such a foolish thing?"

"I don't believe they would ever look as beautiful as yours, miss, so she need not try," said Janet, as she began the usual process of twisting up her young lady's hair in three-cornered papers.

"Ah, but Esther's would curl naturally; she has no need of these disagreeable papers. O, Janet, how you do pull! I declare I will not bear it:" and Mabel made matters worse by impatience. Nevertheless, she dayly endured this perpetual grievance for vanity's sake, to which she would not have submitted from any other cause; for Janet scrupled not to pull and twist with merciless zeal, until the poor little head looked in most uncomfortable condition for the pillow.

"There now, Miss Mabel," she complacently exclaimed, surveying her work, "it will curl tomorrow like anything. Mrs. Blake used to say your mamma's was beautiful; and when she had dressed her all in white satin and lace, and put

on her jewels, she looked like a real angel, and I do believe Mrs. Blake almost thought she was one too."

"And I will look the same when I have grown a little taller; and then, Janet, you shall dress me in satin and lace, and I will wear all those beautiful ornaments too, that are locked up in the wardrobes and kept only for me. How delightful it will be! But, Janet, don't you think Esther Severn is a very pretty little girl?"

"I don't think anything of her by the side of I know who. So good-night, Miss Mabel." And the young lady, with her thoughts full of a yet distant future, and a heart full of well-watered weeds, made Janet sit by her bedside, and tell stories of knights and princesses until she fell asleep.

CHAPTER II.

A PROUD HEART CRUSHED AND DESOLATED.

Take heed, regard not iniquity; for this hast thou chosen rather than affliction.—Job xxxvi, 21.

Many years had passed since, in that large room with the massive furniture and tall mirrors, the infant Mabel had been lifted on to the bed, where she played with the heavy fringe in childish delight, all unconscious of the loss that was preparing for her. She had laid her head by a calm, sweet face that reposed upon the pillow, and received the last kiss and blessing of her dying mother. Then the door was locked, and she might no more visit the chamber of death. The house was almost as dark as a tomb; its inhabitants moved gently about like black specters, voices murmured in whispers, and sorrow deep and terrible bowed down the manly

spirit of the lately happy master of Helme Lodge.

Mr. Croyden had idolized the gentle companion who was now removed from his sight, and in whose society he had rested the happiness of his life. She had just learned, to her soul's salvation, the glad tidings of a Saviour's love, when the same gracious hand that had directed her to the cross was stretched forth to raise her to the crown, and she passed away in the first bloom of her faith and love, from temptation, and sorrow, and sin.

Her husband had not become a partaker of "like precious faith," and stood like a lightning-scathed oak, compelled to live on, though the fair branches and green foliage lie withered on the ground. No tear softened the stern gaze of his eye, no hope whispered comfort to his heart; he was utterly, willfully, proudly desolate.

The pitying pastor under whose faithful instruction Mrs. Croyden had run her short Christian career, followed the mourner to his solitude,

and sought to win him from the indulgence of his grief.

"Did you mark," said he, "the glorious promise of resurrection life? You have but to look to Jesus to find not only a Saviour, but a Comforter, and the sweet hope of reunion with her whom he has called away before you. It is by trust in such promises through every providence, however dark, that we have opportunity to glorify a God of love."

"Love!" said Mr. Croyden. "I believe not in love that could inflict such a blow as this. Love would have spared us both, or struck us down together."

"My dear sir, 'He that spared not his own Son, but delivered him up' to sorrow and death for the salvation of sinners, has surely placed his love beyond all doubt. Your beloved one, pardoned and accepted in Christ, is gone from all the changes and sorrows of time to fullness of joy for evermore: and was not this love? You are spared while yet you may learn to follow in her happy steps; and this also is love.

O, do not think hard thoughts of him whose outstretched arms in Jesus Christ invite the weary and heavy laden, the mourner and the bereaved, to find in his bosom sympathy and peace."

"If you speak of justice I can better understand you. Doubtless there is justice in the bliss of one, the misery of the other. Do not tell me of pardon for her, she needed none; and her example might have influenced me to happy imitation."

"My friend," said Mr. Severn, "all that you think she could have done, and far, far more, Christ and his Spirit can do; shall we not ask him?"

"I have nothing to ask, except she could come back again," coldly replied the mourner.

It was no moment to argue, and Mr. Severn went to the nursery to try another appeal. He carried the little Mabel to her father, and placed her before him.

"Look here, and see if you have not some-

thing left to love, and a sweet hope of even human sympathy in years to come."

He gazed vacantly on the half-frightened child, but bestowed no sign of tenderness.

"Love!" said he, as if musing within himself, and in a tone of bitter irony; "love! to deprive a helpless thing like this of a mother's care! There is neither love nor pity for her or me."

Alas! the case did indeed seem hopeless. The call of God's providence for an idolatrous heart was unheard, and the only power rejected that could have extracted the iron from his soul, and poured in balm and consolation. Self-will had been thwarted, and pride triumphed amid the mutiny of rebellious feeling. Such is man left to himself; and the pitying love of the true Comforter rejected, sorrow, unsanctified by grace, gnaws like the undying worm.

Mr. Croyden aroused himself to one painful effort, and having ordered everything valuable which had belonged to his late wife to be laid carefully in their several receptacles, he once

more visited the scene of her departure, to affix his great family signet to the wardrobes and chests; and then consigning his child for the present to the care of her attached and trustworthy nurse, he quitted the house and neighborhood, and finally the country, to wander a desolate man over Europe.

Mr. Severn's views of affliction, and his assurances of the acceptance before God of one so amiable and lovely, by virtue of any other merit than her own, had not been without their influence on Mr. Croyden's mind. While happy and indulged, religion had seemed a pleasant, proper thing, and it had been of little moment to him what might be read in the Bible, or preached in the pulpit, or practiced in the life. He knew that Mr. Severn was useful and beloved in the parish, and that Mrs. Croyden had lately taken warm interest in promoting all his plans for the benefit and improvement of the village and district, and he was ready to sanction whatever she approved. Their motives of action did not interest him, and he knew not whether they

were raising for themselves a claim upon the favor of God, or whether they rested for that favor on the merit of his Son Jesus Christ.

It was true that he heard the Gospel preached, but it was only as "a pleasant song." It was true that the dying words of his wife had been of Jesus, the only, the complete salvation; but she was so humble, so timid, so meek, it was not remarkable that *she* should renounce self. It was also true that Mr. Severn spoke of Jesus as the sympathizing Friend of the mourner; but how could any man know that, who was not like him steeped in the very bitterness of sorrow, sorrow to which the bare suggestion of comfort was an offense?

And now he began to assure himself that the religion he had tolerated was in reality a mistake and an extravagance; and this conviction operated to the disadvantage of others, as much as to his own discomfort.

The church where Mr. Severn ministered had been a dismantled abbey, part of which had been rescued from total dilapidation for the pur-

pose of public worship; and where the anathemas of Rome had once been fulminated from the high altar, the word of life was now proclaimed with warmth and earnestness to an attached and attentive people.

But recently certain fears of the stability of the old walls had arisen from new clefts among the decaying mullions, and the threatening appearance of bat-winged saints and owl-faced dignitaries, who figured ornamentally from cornice and pinnacle; and on one occasion an unprepossessing relic of medieval taste, which had long puffed out his indignant cheeks at the reformers' pulpit, suddenly descended from his perch to the lower region, where he lay in ruins like shattered Dagon.

The alarm caused by this and similar indications was not to be soothed by cement, and the result of Mrs. Croyden's interference was to evolve in a new edifice on a different site, leaving the abbey to the treacherous embraces of the ivy, as an ornamental illustration of the frailty of human works and superstitions, amid

the ever-living works of God, in the verdant valley where it stood.

But ere the first stone was laid, ere the generous addition to the endowment contemplated by its founders was arranged, the originator of the plan was called up higher; and as Mr. Croyden quitted home without allusion to the subject, delicacy and tender pity for his sorrow withheld all desire to urge it on his attention; and the pastor having dislodged all suspicious ornaments, and patched up threatening crevices, continued to preach Christ crucified, the everlasting rock, the strength and security of all who believe in him, amid the wreck of earthly grandeur and the decaying touch of time.

For a long space the self-exiled mourner nursed his grief abroad, wandering from city to city, from country to country, like a criminal condemned to accomplish a certain amount of labor, and sighing for the hour of release. The genial qualities of his moral nature were blighted, and strangers were soon checked in overtures of courtesy, and turned away from the gloomy

and unsocial recluse who declined their sympathy or solace. Once, however, a stranger more persevering, and perhaps less selfish than others, pressed his company and conversation beyond the common habit and topics of the day, and intimated his conviction that sorrow was the indulged and ever-present companion of one so solitary and depressed.

"I also am in sorrow," he said, "and in that we can fully sympathize." Mr. Croyden perceived that the speaker was in mourning, but he looked incredulously into the calm and even cheerful countenance, as he remarked that sorrow had affected them differently.

"There are two kinds of sorrow," said the stranger, in a kind and winning tone of voice; "one that realizes a wholesome discipline from a watchful Father's hand, and one that accuses him of needless caprice. This rebels, and is angry; the other kisses the chastening rod, and believes that all is well."

"There may be sorrows that admit of such belief," said Mr. Croyden, "but there may also

be others that seem so arbitrarily appointed, so hopelessly prostrating, that the crushed spirit has but to resign itself to its misery, and endure as best it may."

"You say well that they '*seem*' so," returned the stranger; "for really so, no sorrow coming from God can be. Unerring wisdom, and unchanging love, mark all his dealings with his children. 'He doth not willingly afflict nor grieve the children of men,' but for their profit always."

"Sir, you cannot judge for others; your application of such faith must be to your own happier experience."

"Yet I feel privileged to speak, for I have that evidence of relationship which enables me to touch so deep a theme, 'What son is he whom the Father chasteneth not?' Pardon and bear with the voluntary confidence when I justify to your heart that assertion, and add, that within the last six months a wife, a son, a daughter, all dearer than my life, have fallen asleep, and I am left alone; yet not alone, for He who has

struck these successive blows has been with me, faithful to his promise to comfort and sustain."

Mr. Croyden gazed for a moment in the stranger's face, where strong agitation struggled with some invisible power, which nevertheless held mastery and triumphed, for again, after a few moments, all was calm as before.

"You did not love them as I loved; you did not live for them; you did not idolize them," said Mr. Croyden in rising excitement.

"I thank God I did not," replied the stranger, solemnly; "but there was only One I loved better, and he cannot die again."

He remained silent, and the listener felt that there was a touching dignity in such sorrow which his own rebellious, selfish grief had never attained. "But," thought he, "perhaps he is naturally so hopeful and buoyant that nothing could crush him."

"Your eye inquires the result of such a trial," resumed the stranger. "At first I was dumb. Then I trembled lest unbelief should urge me to rebellion; but consoling grace whispered as I

lay in anguish and desolation, 'It is I, be not afraid,' and enabled the first conscious cry of my riven heart to be, 'Even so, Father, for so it seemed good in thy sight.' Believe me, fellow-mourner, it is only love responding to love that can accomplish this. I owe it to the matchless mercy of the God of love made manifest in Jesus Christ, to bear this testimony to his goodness. Happy should I feel if my intrusion on your solitude could lead you to the tender bosom on which I rest for comfort as well as salvation, and induce you to taste the only remedy for an aching heart, and to be cheered in the only hope that can revive its energies and rightly influence its service. Simply come and trust in Jesus, who has supplies for every need, and you will find that faint is all human description of the power and faithfulness of his Divine unselfish friendship."

Mr. Croyden was touched, and then displeased. "Always Jesus," thought he. "These people seem to have no idea of religion without so much of Jesus: as if man were a helpless

infant, incapable of an effort of his own." "Why have you made no effort then?" suggested conscience. And, after a long struggle, he proudly resolved that he would make an effort; he would rouse himself to the magnanimity of self-control, and choose to live for the benefit of others, though destitute of happiness himself, and all without the help of any one, human or Divine.

CHAPTER III.

THE OVERTASKED STUDENT.

Where shall wisdom be found? and where is the place of understanding? God understandeth the way thereof, and he knoweth the place thereof. And unto man he said, Behold, the fear of the Lord, that is wisdom; and to depart from evil is understanding.—Job xxviii, 12, 23, 28.

Time, which was nothing to Mr. Croyden, was important at home; for during his long absence the old church had become dangerous, and it was necessary to know his intentions concerning the new one. However, the idea had wholly evaporated. Mr. Severn was not held in such esteem as to render his feelings a consideration; and Mr. Croyden proceeded to order the erection of a beautiful mausoleum within his own grounds, and then visited Rome for the purpose of procuring a monumental sculpture of the most costly and chaste description, to be placed

within it to the memory of his departed wife; while the disappointed parishioners assembled for worship in their school-room, until measures could be arranged for their better accommodation.

The disappointment was great to Mr. Severn in another respect. The living was small, and the wants of a rising family made the prospect of the additional endowment acceptable to his increasing need; besides which, the loss of Mrs. Croyden's liberal assistance among the poor had left an additional burden on his slender means. His son, a talented, high-spirited boy, needed the advantages of a good school, and Mrs. Severn would have been thankful for assistance in the education of her daughters. But in the contemplation of their circumstances both looked beyond human agencies and instrumentalities to the invisible Director of them all. They knew that neither accident nor chance is in the vocabulary of faith, and that though "man's heart deviseth his way, the Lord directeth his steps."

At the period of their settlement at H——, it had seemed the very appointment of their prayer-answering God, and it was not their gift to prophesy of future results. They had asked him to glorify his own great name in them and by them wherever their lot was cast; and having acted with that desire in the exercise of the judgment he had bestowed, they were not now to mistrust and despond because a cloud had gathered over their prospect, and their best earthly friend had been removed when apparently most needed, and because opposition and disappointment had sprung up where either was least expected.

They were fully aware of the real cause of Mr. Croyden's decision. His enmity was not against them, but against their Master; and even his child had been withheld from their care, lest she should be early influenced in favor of principles in which he could not sympathize, from the maternal attention with which Mrs. Severn would gladly have watched over her. They did not resent it, though it pained them; but remembered that since the domestic scene

in Hebrew life, when he that was born after the flesh persecuted him that was born after the Spirit, even so still, in all the principles of action, in all the tastes and pursuits of life, the two classes then represented are and must be contrary the one to the other.

As years passed on, with very formal and reserved intercourse with the parsonage, the little girl at Helme Lodge was transferred from the indulgent fondness of her nurse to the flatteries of an ignorant waiting-maid, and the discipline of an accomplished governess. Under the latter, notwithstanding fits of indolence and passion, she made creditable progress in study; but with the assistance of the former, she was rapidly maturing in the vanity and selfishness which, if unchecked, readily twine in luxuriant abundance around the youthful heart. She fully enjoyed the conviction that people in her station of life were born for their own good pleasure and amusement; that young ladies especially lived and were educated to "come out" and be admired, and in consequence to be-

come each, in due time, the despotic mistress of some lordship or estate, as the case might be.

Not so the children of the Christian family at the parsonage. They were taught that the end of man's existence is only answered when he lives to glorify his God and Saviour, and while the melancholy story of the loss of this holy power and aim was not only understood as fact, but realized in experience, they were directed to the new creating grace which alone can restore the loss, and replace fallen man in the happy exercise of loving and grateful obedience.

The Lord "Jesus Christ, and him crucified" for sinners; the lovely example of his dayly life as the perfect pattern for their imitation; his ready sympathy and willing bestowal of grace to help in every need; his sweet and soothing words, his sanctifying friendship, his holy abhorrence of evil, and his abundant supply of a secret indwelling agency, by whose irresistible power a thing so polluted as a human heart may be touched, transformed, renewed, were all truths with which their minds were familiar

and the influence of which was illustrated in dayly practice before their eyes.

They learned that God's will in all the events of life must be supreme; and that until man's will is subordinated to it, he bears within his bosom a perpetual torment, an element of hell; but that he who bends before it in humble acquiescence because assured that it is not only supreme, but wise, and good, and kind, causing all things to "work together for good to them that love him," possesses the secret of peace, an element of heaven, and glorifies God in his highest attributes.

Thus they were instructed; but even while obeying the precept and pleading the promise, their parents could not command the blessing, nor control the time and manner of its bestowal.

Walter Severn was a bold, ambitious, talented youth, whose pride and self-dependence found scope and gratification in the ease with which he conquered difficulties in his early studies, and the encouragement he received from injudicious admirers to pursue the bent of

his genius in any path it might please him to strike out. He affected contempt for common minds and the ordinary drudgeries of real life, and resolved to prove that honor, fame, and wealth were the lawful prizes of intellectual superiority, and that the real lights of the world were the heads most filled with human learning.

His father watched him with anxiety, and warned him with love, as he saw him often reject, with ill-concealed disdain, the truths and precepts of God's holy word; and, "wise in his own conceits," enter upon a course at once flattering to his hopes, and dangerous to his highest interests.

At college, he was again brought into contact with his friend, Mark Leighton, with whom many a discussion was good-humoredly held concerning the value and end of their respective objects in life. The instruction of their earlier years, which had fallen as seed by the wayside on the ear of the one, had, by the grace of God, taken deep root in the heart of the other.

Mark, though not possessed of the brilliant

talents of his ambitious friend, was respected for strong good sense and clear judgment, while he was far from deficient in intellectual power and correct taste; and while availing himself of all the advantages of education, was chiefly desirous to qualify himself to adorn, for God's glory, the station in life he might be destined to fill.

One morning, having visited Walter's room, he found him, as usual, at his books, but so pale and haggard that his countenance easily betrayed the fact of a sleepless night of mental labor.* He laughed off Mark's remonstrance, but confessed that, having encountered a difficult problem, he would not allow himself to sleep until he had solved it. This was no rare instance of the use to which he applied the hours that should have been devoted to rest of mind and body.

"I would not venture to reprimand you," said Mark, kindly, "if you were supplied with relays of half a dozen heads to submit to such inordinate labor, but one aching brow cannot

* See Frontispiece.

long endure it. You will unfit yourself for all study, and then what becomes of your hope? What after all can you find in your learned pursuits worthy the willful sacrifice of a talent so precious as health? For it is a talent bestowed upon us with as much right to its time of cultivation in our twenty-four hours, as any other gift or blessing intrusted to our charge."

"You Goth!" exclaimed Walter, gayly; "how often must I tell you that the mind, with its noble faculties, and yet undeveloped powers, was never intended to be cramped and controlled by a little paltry fatigue of body?"

"But whatever might be intended, Walter, we know that man himself provoked that penalty when, by disobedience, he allied himself to corruption; and what if death were suddenly to arrest the over-worked body, and set free the boastful spirit only to find that the lesson best worth knowing has been left unlearned?"

"Pshaw! you are my excellent father's most worthy pupil," said Walter; "and neither of you can be made to comprehend that I am

seeking your own goal after all, though by a different route. For, in the ennobling pursuits of science and learning, and the diligent cultivation of his intellect, man fits himself for the pure enjoyments of heaven, and finds congeniality with angels."

"So says not the word of God, the only record whence fallen man can derive a correct idea of heavenly enjoyment and the companionship of unfallen creatures," replied Mark. "It rather declares the reverse: 'Though I speak with the tongues of men and of angels; though I understand all mysteries, and all knowledge, and have not love,' (love to God because he first loved me,) 'I am nothing.'"

"But," said Walter, "it is impossible for the mind to revel in the wonders of creation, and trace its thousand paths of scientific beauty, from man himself down to the minutest atom that inhabits space, and not admire, or, if you prefer the word, love the great Creator."

"The lives, and deaths also, of some whom you deem giants in intellect, and masters in

philosophy, do prove that it is quite possible," said Mark. "Admiration is not love; the beauties of creation do not teach redemption, which is the great manifestation of the love that originates a response in the human heart; and the mysteries of science do not unfold 'the mystery of godliness.' It is a fact from which there is no escape, that man, with all his wonderful endowments, is fallen and a sinner, and without love, redemption, and godliness, can never reach the heaven you speak of, nor find congeniality with God and holy angels. My friend, be warned in time that

"'Knowledge is not wisdom. If thy mind
Forget who gave it grace the prize to win,
And for what end it was by Him design'd;
If thou degrade the precious spirit within
To the base service of the world and sin,
Content to barter thine immortal powers
For the vain plaudits of a few short hours;
If learning teach thee not humility,
Conscious whate'er thou know'st, how much unknown,
And with the phantom of a shade thou try
To fill the immortal soul, which God alone
Can satisfy; far better hadst thou gone

Through life the lowliest being that e'er trod,
In happy ignorance, his kindred sod.

Walk humbly with thy Maker; ever look
From earth, and earth's vain dreams, with steadfast gaze
Fix'd on th' eternal world. His blessed book
Take with thee through the perils of life's maze,
Guide to thy feet, a lamp unto thy ways;
So shalt thou find, no meteor wildly driven,
The light that leads thee on, but "light" indeed "from heaven."'"

'Grant all this," said Walter; "yet would you restrain the mind that craves for what you call human learning?"

"Surely not; I only plead for that 'immortal soul which God alone can satisfy.' For if all your time, and energies, and hopes, are occupied upon your insatiable intellect, what will you have gained if your soul is starving to eternal death? I only remind you of his wisdom who said, 'Seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness;' and having possession of the best knowledge first, then range, if you please, through all other kingdoms,

animal, vegetable, and mineral, at leisure to enjoy and appreciate their treasures. But you are false to your own principle of development, while you neglect any part of your compound nature; and there must sometimes be felt the cravings of an unsatisfied soul for a resting place which nothing imperfect or uncertain can supply. I can find no language earnest enough in which to entreat you to begin at the true beginning, and to join me in the declaration that 'The Lord is my light and my salvation;' 'My soul shall make her boast in him;' and 'we will magnify and exalt his name together.' Far from cramping your noble energies, I would see them devoted to his glory, your stores of knowledge drawn out in his service, and your heart satisfied with a perfect rest with which no power on earth can intermeddle; and until then I must pray for you the apostle's prayer, that you may 'be strengthened with might by God's Holy Spirit, that Christ may dwell in your heart by faith;' and that you 'may be enabled to comprehend what is the breadth, and length,

and depth, and height; and to know the love of Christ, which passeth knowledge.' Surely here is a theme sublime enough for the loftiest intellect, while it is constraining enough to win and purify the proudest heart, and to moderate, direct, and consecrate the efforts and attainments of the highest human genius.

"And, Walter," added his friend, suddenly changing the animated tone of his voice to that of affectionate solicitude, as he laid his hand on the young student's burning forehead, and watched the unnatural brightness of his eye, "the time may not be long before you are compelled to realize for yourself the fact that for the present, mind is linked with matter, liable to disease which requires more than philosophy to bear with patience, and a spirit whose cravings will need all God's provision for its peace and safety. God in his marvelous and beautiful creation may speak to our intellect, our taste, our natural senses; but only in his sacred word, and by the secret power of his Holy

Spirit, does he appeal to hearts, and instruct and commune with immortal souls."

"Away with you and your evil omens croaking in my ear," exclaimed Walter, shaking himself and forcing a smile; "I never was better in body, soul, or spirit."

CHAPTER IV.

THE STOLEN JEWELS.

There is a sore evil which I have seen under the sun, namely, riches kept for the owners thereof to their hurt.—Eccles. v, 13.

Your riches are corrupted, and your garments are moth-eaten.—James v, 2.

While Walter's career at college inspired the hope of speedy relief from the pecuniary pressure it had caused at home, in the attainment of some lucrative position, his sisters were gradually improving under the affectionate and careful instruction of their parents; and as Mrs. Severn and her daughters sat together at their pleasant window, working and reading by turns, a casual observer might have supposed, from the peaceful expression of each countenance, that no causes of disquiet interrupted the calm tenor of their lives. Yet a letter to Mr. Severn had recently warned him of the effect of intense

study on the constitution of his son, and an earnest entreaty to return home for relaxation and change had been dispatched in the names of all who loved him there.

Another source of uneasiness lay in the deceitful light that shone in Esther's eyes, and the fitful bloom which played on her cheek; and now and then she caught her mother's glance, as she resumed her work, after a long gaze into the blue sky, whither some secret aspiration had ascended from her warm and earnest heart.

Does thoughtlessness or unbelief ask why sorrow, pain, or death should intrude upon such scenes of peaceful love, where the grace of God has effected the translation of the soul from the power of Satan to the kingdom of Christ? God himself has condescended to assign reasons in his word. By the many avenues of affection which sin laid open to assault, the human heart is tenderly and keenly sensitive to sorrow. To feel sorrow is not to sin, for Jesus wept; and to sorrow gently in earnest desire to profit under

chastening, is "godly sorrow" not to be repented of; and though for the present it is not "joyous, but grievous," yet "afterward it yieldeth the peaceable fruit of righteousness," and the sufferer, weaned from some too absorbing tie, is at last enabled to whisper in the ear of sustaining Love, "It is good for me that I have been afflicted;" and again, "Every branch that beareth fruit, he purgeth it, that it may bring forth more fruit:" "Herein is my Father glorified, that ye bear much fruit."

Is the trial poverty and privation? Then patience and contentment are fair fruits in the Husbandman's sight. Is it pain and weariness of body? Then meekness and endurance, in uncomplaining faith, hang gracefully on the living branch. Is it the crush of cherished hopes, the removal of precious friends, the severing of dear earthly bonds? O! is not the covenant of everlasting love "ordered in *all* things and *sure?*" and is not part of its provision that "all things work together for good to them that love God?" "He that spared not his own

Son, but delivered him up for us all, how shall he not with him also freely give us all things?"

But higher still. His glory is very dear to those who know that Jesus died for them; and the believer remembers the Spirit's words, who said, that they who live by virtue of that death "should not henceforth live unto themselves, but unto him which died for them, and rose again." "And rose again!" and now within the vail, as the great High Priest, bearing on his breast the names he loves, and touched with a feeling of all their infirmities, he reigns on the throne of grace, dispensing "help in time of need." So that whatever their appointed tribulations in the world, "in him they have peace." "Peace," he said, "I leave with you; *my peace* I give unto you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid." And under this soothing influence they are enabled to "glory in tribulations also;" and "although the fig-tree shall not blossom, neither shall fruit be in the vines; though the fields shall yield no meat, and the flock shall be cut off from the fold;" and

"many sorrows" besides may afflict the righteous, yet do they "rejoice in the Lord, and joy in the God of their salvation." Such might be the meditations of some of the little party as they pondered on the passages of Helen's book, which treated of "things that accompany salvation."

Suddenly, however, a youthful rider, with glowing cheek, and hair streaming in the breeze, reined up her pony at the garden gate, and throwing the bridle to the servant who attended her, sprang to the ground and advanced to the house.

"It is Miss Croyden," said Helen. "How gay and bright she looks!" and hastening to meet her, they entered the room together.

"How are you, dear Esther? Helen thinks you are much better," exclaimed Mabel; and without waiting for a reply, she proceeded, "I am so glad, because I want you to come to the Lodge to-morrow. It will be my birthday, and at last I have teased papa to break the seals, and surrender the keys of my long-promised

treasures. It is quite a year sooner than I really expected, and I am half wild with delight; but I have persuaded him that I am really old enough to be trusted now. It will be like 'coming of age,' you know, and you must not refuse to come. I am sure you will allow them, Mrs. Severn?"

"Certainly, my love, if Esther feels well enough."

"But, mamma," said Helen, "suppose Walter should come home to-morrow; and we should not like to leave you alone. Miss Croyden will excuse us when she hears of our anxiety."

"O, don't disappoint me," cried the young lady, her gayety subsiding; "you know papa allows me to associate with so few young people, and I want you to be pleased with all my beautiful things."

"But poor Walter may be very ill," said Esther.

"Suppose we arrange it thus," said Mrs. Severn: "Should no news arrive to-morrow to

increase our apprehensions, and if Miss Croyden will permit me also to witness her pleasure, we will all spend a few hours with her at the Lodge, returning home in time to receive our traveler, should he really arrive, and also thus guard Esther from the danger of the evening air."

"That will do delightfully," said Mabel: "you are always kind, though you do lecture me sometimes."

"And if I should presume to do so to-morrow," said Mrs. Severn, smiling, "will you forgive me?"

"What, on my birthday? No lectures on my birthday; I shall not have a moment to listen to them," returned Mabel playfully. "Then you will all come very early, for I shall be in a fever of impatience. Poor Walter! indeed I am very sorry he is so ill; what a pity he is so fond of books!"

The sorrow was evidently not very deep, for in the next moment she was skipping over the lawn, humming a tune, and mounting the pretty pony, cantered away.

"Dear mamma!" exclaimed Helen, "I cannot help wondering at your willingness to go and see Mabel's 'treasures,' as she calls them. I don't think I care much about them."

"Nor I," said Esther; "but perhaps mamma thinks we ought to feel sympathy in Mabel's pleasure."

"She did not manifest much in our anxiety," said Helen.

"My dear girls, have you not found that before we can weep with those that weep we must know something of sorrow ourselves? And Mabel has perhaps never been under further trial than that of a hard lesson or a rainy day. We can, nevertheless, rejoice with her; and I really do wish to be with her on this occasion, for I knew her dear mother, and if I can find an opportunity to say for her what she would have said for herself were she present, my visit will not have been in vain."

"But, mamma, is it not encouraging Mabel in silly love for things that will not confer any real benefit upon her? She has always seemed

to covet these jewels more for their own sakes than because they belonged to her mother."

"I think she knows us well enough to appreciate the reason of our interest, Helen; and her volatility is such that she will tire of them as a child of its toy after the novelty has subsided. I expect in a week she will wonder that there is neither increase of happiness nor satisfaction in her new possessions."

The next morning Mabel received her visitors with an ecstasy of delight, and accompanied by them, with her father and governess, led the way to the scene of triumph.

"Mabel little imagines the pang she is inflicting on me to-day," observed Mr. Croyden to Mrs. Severn, who was deeply pained at the transports of the thoughtless girl, and stepping forward whispered a gentle remonstrance.

"Mabel, my child," said she, "you have no idea of the train of painful thought you are reawakening in your father's mind. Remember that he has never touched one of these memorials of your beloved mother, perhaps has

scarcely entered her room since her body was borne from it to the grave."

Mabel turned with instant seriousness, and shocked at the expression of woe on her father's countenance, she arrested his further progress, while the tears sprang to her eyes. "O, papa, let us leave it for to-day; I will wait, indeed I will. I cannot bear to let you go there now."

But he drew her arm within his own, and proceeded with a resolute step. "It shall be done now, Mabel, and it will then rest with your discretion to accustom me to see you adorned with memorials of the loss we both sustained."

It was impossible to repress the returning joy and satisfaction with which Mabel beheld the great seals broken, and the key applied to those mirror doors where she had so often exercised her imagination on the treasures they concealed. And now her heart beat with anticipation of the immediate realization of the dreams of her childhood, and drawing her young friends forward on either side, she gazed in breathless sus-

DISAPPOINTED HOPES.

pense. A moment more and the lock yielded, the doors flew open.

But where is language to describe the scene?

Mr. Croyden stepped back in shocked surprise, and Mabel gazed at him and at the vacant shelves by turns, stupefied at the astounding disclosure. Immediately drawers and chests were rapidly opened and explored, with the same mysterious result, and then a furious peal of bells summoned the whole domestic staff to the room, to be examined on the spot concerning the remorseless thief who had rifled the depositories of their valuable contents.

But all professed utter ignorance of the matter; and Mr. Croyden retired to the library to recall and collect, if possible, the names of servants who had left the Lodge subsequent to the death of its late mistress, in the hope of tracing out and punishing the guilty author of the unexpected depredation.

Helen and Esther, in sincere pity for Mabel's disappointment, obeyed their mother's sign to

depart also; and Mrs. Severn turned in tender interest to the couch where she lay sobbing with rage and mortification.

"O! Mrs. Severn," she exclaimed, "I cannot be comforted. How cruel to rob me of my mother's property!"

"Some one has laid a burden on his or her conscience which will prove a tormentor more cruel than your disappointment, dear Mabel."

"I hope so indeed," she replied energetically. "I do hope papa will find out the thief. O, mademoiselle, is there nothing left? Do feel along those shelves, and try if there may not be some little thing that belonged to dear mamma."

Mademoiselle, who had been compassionating the state of affairs in French, willingly obeyed, and dived at once along a shelf level with her face, where a colony of moths had taken peaceable possession of some remnants of furs, and whence her sudden invasion of their repose roused a cloud of dust, and startled the whole settlement into a flutter. "Bah!" ex-

claimed mademoiselle, retreating in disgust; "they are as bad as the thief. Mais, voilà ma chère, I felt something. I will try again." And again she advanced to the assault, and drew from a mass of rubbish a small morocco case.

Mabel rushed toward it with a scream of delight. "It is, it must be one of the caskets," she cried, seizing the prize; but a doubt succeeded as she unclosed the clasp, and blank disappointment again settled on her countenance as she drew forth her mother's Bible.

Mademoiselle having completed the search, and pronounced that there was nothing worth a sou remaining, disappeared, leaving Mrs. Severn alone with Mabel and the Bible.

"If it had only been one casket!" said Mabel.

"It was your mother's lamp, dear child," said Mrs. Severn; "the light to her path; and it is the casket, too, whence, with the key of prayer, she dayly adorned herself with lovely ornaments, in the sight of God of great price. Here, after all, is that which she valued most, and

here she learned the secret of the happiness she is enjoying now."

"I could have fifty Bibles if I please," said Mabel pettishly.

"True, but you will never find one presented to your heart in such striking contrast as this to-day. It seems to say to you as a message from the better world where its dear owner dwells, 'Lay not up for yourselves treasures upon earth, where moth and rust do corrupt, and where thieves break through and steal: but lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust doth corrupt, and where thieves do not break through nor steal.'"

"O, Mrs. Severn, I am too young to think about that at present."

"Nay, dear Mabel, for you are not too young to realize the fact that the great enemy of God and man has robbed you of the holiness without which you cannot live in heaven, and the peace without which you cannot be happy on earth. This precious book tells of One who can restore both; of Jesus, who was 'made sin for us, that

we might be made the righteousness of God in him,' and presented again faultless before his Father with exceeding joy; of Jesus, who bestows 'peace that passeth understanding,' in the pardon of our sins, in the renewal of our hearts by his Holy Spirit, and a life of affectionate obedience to his will and example. He was all this to your mother, Mabel; will you not try to tread in her steps?"

"I—I hope so, Mrs. Severn," hesitated Mabel; "but I cannot help being very disappointed and grieved at my great and cruel loss. Mamma had all these things as well as her Bible, and so ought I."

"There is no impropriety in such possessions, and your kind father will supply you with all that are suitable to your position in life; therefore, in fact, this loss is in a great measure reparable. The loss to which I have alluded is real and irreparable, except in God's own appointed way, which is so easy and so happy that I long to see you accept it. And one of its peculiar attractions is, that it offers the sweetest

comfort and most satisfying joy to those who are disappointed and grieved at the uncertainty and inconstancy of all earthly possessions and pleasures. It appeals to you at this moment in beautiful contrast with the failure of youthful hopes long cherished, and the loss of valued treasures supposed to be secure. It is not by chance that this book remains, dear Mabel. May its precious truths, which abide forever, and are as immovable as their glorious Author, be your heart's resting-place amid the joys and sorrows, the changes and chances of this mortal life."

As the keenness of first feelings subsided, Mabel's active thoughts suggested a new idea. Her desire for ornaments and jewels had been associated with the wish to resemble her mother in the personal attractions of which she had heard such glowing descriptions from her nurse. The part her ornaments had played in the tout-ensemble was now impracticable; and gazing into the mirror, she began to think, that after all

there was no absolute connection between beauty and jewelry. She had never been told that she bore the gentle, placid fairness of her mother's countenance, but she could trace a strong resemblance in her own features to those of her father, and she considered that he looked handsome enough without ornaments of any kind.

"My dear Mabel," said he kindly, soon after the occurrences of this memorable day, "you have behaved exceedingly well about your disappointment, and I will purchase for you whatever ornaments you prefer, to remedy in some degree your loss. Let me know what kind will please you best. I have already ordered a watch and appendages, but you must choose between pearls and emeralds, or other descriptions of jewelry, for yourself."

These names sounded pleasant and pretty, and Mabel's resolution for a moment wavered.

"I shall be delighted with the watch, papa, and am very grateful to you for thinking of it; but—but for the other things I cannot judge yet what I am sure to like best; and so, if you

please, papa, I am for the present inclined to set jewelry at defiance."

It was not difficult for even an indulgent parent to understand the meaning of the complacent smile which played from the eye and lip of the young speaker; nor was it wonderful that he also thought she could dispense with the "foreign aid of ornament." So Mabel surrendered herself, for a short period, again to her studies and instructors; and Mr. Croyden commenced a fruitless search for the stolen property.

CHAPTER V.

THE GOVERNESS AND THE BELLE.

Thus saith the Lord, Let not the wise man glory in his wisdom, neither let the mighty man glory in his might, let not the rich man glory in his riches; but let him that glorieth glory in this, that he understandeth and knoweth me, that I am the Lord which exercise loving-kindness, judgment, and righteousness in the earth: for in these things I delight, saith the Lord.—JER. ix, 23, 24.

WALTER SEVERN having, as he imagined, recovered from the languor and weakness induced by intense study, declined the earnest and affectionate invitation of his friends, and applied his whole energies to the attainment of his desires. The highest honors of his university were just now the goal of his ambition; human applause for past efforts added their stimulus to the present, and the idea of being hindered and thwarted in his triumphant career by the pain or weariness of a body that should be slave

instead of master, was too ignoble and mortifying to be endured.

Mark Leighton warned and watched in vain, and his worst fears received their terrible confirmation, when in a moment of gratifying success, while the eyes of admiring professors were fixed upon the persevering and aspiring student, his eyes closed, his tongue faltered, and his exhausted frame was indebted to the aid of friendly arms to reach his room in safety.

Then came long and prostrating illness, aggravated by a rebellious will and disappointed ambition; and when able to bear removal, he who had determined to be independent of the world, to confer instead of receive obligation, was borne home a helpless burden, to inflict on those he had purposed to comfort and ennoble, the keenest pang of sorrow they had ever known.

After a time he was able again to rise and recline at the window on the lawn. But the listless mind, the languid smile, and feeble voice, long proved the shock that nature had

sustained; and when bodily strength was in a measure restored, the absence of a proportionate return of mental vigor became painfully apparent. It was only for a very short space that he conversed with intelligence and coherence, and then, becoming indistinct and imbecile, he seemed to realize the fact of inability to pursue his train of thought, and bursting into tears, would weep himself to rest in childlike slumber.

Thus to the overtaxed energies that lately mocked at difficulties, "the grasshopper was a burden" ere life had reached its prime, and the effort to grasp at happiness and wisdom, independently of their only true and satisfying source, was checked in the moment of anticipated gratification; the shadow disappeared, and the powers that had pursued it were exhausted.

Mr. and Mrs. Severn mourned over the melancholy wreck, and the sisters, who had fondly hoped far different things for their much-loved brother, were the last to yield credit to his real condition. But as successive weeks and months passed away, and no improvement appeared,

they were compelled to resign their hope, and to share the sad duty of watching over his safety, and following him in his wayward wanderings.

In the meantime the expenses of Walter's illness had pressed heavily on his father's slender income. Esther's delicacy of health demanded many indulgences and attentions which it now became difficult to supply; and Helen beheld with pain the rigid self-denial of her admirable mother, which she vainly endeavored to prevent by greater self-denial of her own. She was thoughtful and considerate, and resolved to leave no effort untried which promised mitigation of the pressure that now increased the trials of those she so dearly loved.

"Ah, if Mr. Croyden had but built the new church!" thought she as her mind retraced the causes of their present distress: "but he did not, and therefore it is useless to think of what might have been, unless through negligence or omission of my own duty I had to learn a lesson for the future. If poor Walter had not worked

himself ill! But he has done so, and I must look at the facts without repining at their causes. Now if I could but do something to assist! and why not? I have received a substantial, if not a fashionable education. I have been taught by the Spirit of God, and the example of Jesus, that real love to God and my dear parents is not a profession in words, or a mere feeling hidden in the heart; it is, or ought to be, activity and practice. Surely I can, I ought, I will do something; and now what shall it be? 'Lord, what wilt thou have me to do?'"

"What are you thinking of, Helen?" said Mr. Severn, startling his daughter from a reverie, in which the expression of her countenance had suddenly changed from firm resolve to gentle, waiting submission.

"Dear papa, come and walk with me, and I will tell you;" and they walked away out of sight from the cottage.

"Walter does not improve, papa."

"He does not, Helen; and we should live in constant recognition of God's forgiving love in

the gift of his own dear Son, that we may never be tempted to repine under chastening that can proceed only from the same love."

"Esther is not well either," continued Helen; and she thought her father's lip quivered for a moment as he replied:

"That also is true; but Esther is a sincere believer in our dear Redeemer, and we must not forget that heaven is her home, nor that praise should mingle with our mourning if she were called there soon."

"O, papa!" said Helen, trembling with apprehension, "do you, indeed, think her life in danger?"

"Not immediately, dear Helen; but our kind medical friends have been observing her during their attendance on your brother, and they fear she will gradually decline, unless—" Here he paused, and wished he could recall the word.

"Unless what? O, dear papa, will you not tell me the hope?"

"Unless we could give her the benefit of a

change of climate, which you know, dearest, we cannot do. Therefore it is our duty to dismiss all ifs, and patiently abide the will of God."

"He often works out his will by human means," said Helen.

"But if he does not give the means, we should believe that it is not his will to use or bless them," said Mr. Severn.

"But, dear papa, may we not endeavor to obtain them? Perhaps you could exchange your duties for those of some kind clergyman who lives in the better climate. Only think —her life! my sister's life! our dear, dear Esther!"

"Be calm, my Helen, and be assured that I have not neglected this and other efforts to attain the means, but no way yet appears. Our duty is to be still and wait upon our God."

"But I too have thought of something," said Helen, earnestly; "and I feel now encouraged to ask your approval and help in my project. Dear papa, I am strong and well,

and know enough to venture on the instruction of little children. If I could be a governess, I could assist you a little; and O, how happy I should be to do it!"

The father pressed the hand that leaned confidingly upon his arm, and looked on the earnest face that pleaded for his approval of the plan. She was, indeed, the only one of his children blessed with health; but, as he thought, far too fragile and tender for

> "The world's stern field of battle,
> Or the bivouac of life."

Yet he understood her feelings and motives, and dared not suffer parental weakness to crush these energies of mind and will which were rising to the providential emergences she saw around her. How knew he but that God himself might be working within her "to will and to do of his own good pleasure?" Thousands, nurtured tenderly on the bosom of home affections, were doing the same, and were honored to lead the steps of childhood

in the way of life. He had trained his daughter to be Christ's servant; and to the direction of such a Master he fearlessly committed her.

The calm judgment of her Christian mother also took the same view. Mrs. Severn remembered, when her fair child reposed an infant in her arms, how earnestly she had desired to shield her from every evil; and as she grew up, affectionate and sensitive, talented and attractive, how intensely she had sought to guard her from worldly contact, and to retain her within the holy influences of a Christian home. And now that her prayers were answered, her obedience to God's precepts blessed, and his Spirit had taken possession of her heart, ere the world had opportunity to captivate and ensnare, she saw that the way to further activity and usefulness in some path of life must soon be suggested to her mind; and to check the indications of that way, because it was not the one which jealous earthly love would have selected, were at once ungrateful and inconsistent.

To see her elevated and admired, independent and beloved, would have been gratifying to the natural heart, and an object for which mothers often toil and strive; but to see her the humble, consistent follower of Jesus, toiling patiently, and enduring uncomplainingly, though perhaps neglected because of her dependence, or forgotten because of her poverty, yet all the while sustained by a noble motive, and comforted by a hidden peace, which the world's favor could not give, nor its frown take away—this was precious to the Christian mother; this elevated her love with the consciousness of Divine sympathy, and soothed her under the prospect of separation from present society and attention, which recent circumstances had rendered doubly acceptable.

Helen's wishes being made known at the Lodge, mademoiselle, who was kindly interested in one about to enter on the same duties as those which had furnished herself with comfortable subsistence for many years, offered the benefit of her instructions in cer-

tain languages and accomplishments, until the much-desired situation should be obtained.

But time passed on; Walter was not better, Esther was not worse. Strict economy and self denial on the part of those who enjoyed health enabled the invalids still to receive many indulgences, the cost of which they never knew; but the temporary change desired for Esther was still impracticable, and Helen began to fear that no means of contributing to it were in store for her, when an unexpected occurrence revived her hopes.

"News, news for you, Helen!" exclaimed Mabel Croyden, abruptly entering the sitting-room of the parsonage one morning. "Some lady has heard of you through our relative who was visiting Helme this summer, and wishes to offer you the instruction of her children. Now if you and she are disposed to be amicable, you can travel with papa and me when we go to town, where I told you I am to spend the season with Mrs. B."

Why Helen should wish to leave home to be

a governess was a mystery to Miss Croyden, which she had never thought of attempting to fathom; and her satisfaction in making this communication was simply caused by the assurance that it would give pleasure to her friend. She had not at first perceived that Walter Severn was reclining on the couch, and for the first time since his illness he rose to recognize her presence.

"You have perhaps forgotten me, Miss Croyden," said he; "but I have not forgotten my impertinent contempt of a certain monument in the old abbey, and have learned to pay more respect to those who carved their way to fame, whatever the road they took. May I ask the purport of your visit to London?"

"I am going to be introduced, I believe," replied Mabel.

"To whom?"

"To the world, to society, to anybody worth knowing, I suppose."

"And does that anticipation gratify you?"

"O yes, it delights me; I have been only

existing here until the happy day should ar rive."

"Ah, then, take care lest you are baffled in the moment of attaining your object. I had an object in life once; I thought I was a king, and would rule in the region of mind, but my kingdom vanished from me; mind and memory are no more at my control, and I am lost, lost! a Nebuchadnezzar, a Babel! Helen will tell you about it. Go, Helen, tell her; the world, empty, life, a blank!"

Helen hurried Mabel away, lest she should witness the painful consequences of the failing effort to follow out his idea; but the plaintive lamentation had touched Mabel's heart, and she wondered if it were possible that "the world" on which she was about to enter could have in reserve any disappointment for her.

Helen immediately entered into a correspondence with Mrs. Gresford, of Green Lawn, which resulted in an engagement, and she was to meet her future pupils in town, where the family were about to spend the ensuing months.

Mrs. Gresford had graciously waived the inconvenience of Miss Severn's religious training, in consideration, she privately said, of the respectability of the connection, and regard for the channel through which she had been introduced; and, moreover, because she had remarked that the children of over-righteous people seldom followed the devices of their fanatical parents; and therefore Miss Severn, in her gratitude for an escape from the restraints of home, would probably be peculiarly manageable, and susceptible of initiation into the ways of the fashionable world, where, though not destined to play any part herself, it was necessary that she should understand what was desirable for those who were.

Mr. Severn, too, had made his inquiries concerning this lady and her family, and regretted that nothing more in harmony with his daughter's principles had offered to her acceptance, but he conjectured that the gay world would present few attractions to a young dependent in the house of a fashionable woman. Besides

which, a relative of his former pupil, Mark Leighton, was a visitor and often an inmate of the family, and Helen might possibly make a valuable friend. He therefore yielded to her entreaties, and Helen departed from the beloved ones for whose sakes the sacrifice was made, to seek a home among strangers, and to enter upon new and responsible cares and duties.

"My Father in heaven will watch over me; 'I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me,'" murmured she in her mother's ear, as she withdrew from the last embrace, concealing from all but the God who was guiding her way the emotions that struggled in her heart.

Mr. Croyden's pride was somewhat chafed to find himself, through his daughter's inconsiderate proposition, the guardian of a governess to her situation, as well as of a belle to her conquests; but Mabel had not seen the matter in any light but that of a kindness to Helen, which would also secure to herself a traveling com-

panion more susceptible of enjoyment and conversation than her own silent and reserved parent.

And now the long-desired day had arrived, and under the auspicious care of her father's relative, the honorable Mrs. B., Mabel was introduced to the gayeties and captivations of "the fashionable world." Mrs. B. had a daughter for whom she had performed the duties of chaperone the preceding winter, and as the young lady's début had resulted in an advantageous engagement with the heir to a title, there was no impediment of maternal jealousy to the presentation of a fair and wealthy young companion to the admiration and homage of her distinguished circle.

Mabel was soon initiated into the mysteries of style and toilette, and being as much intent on pleasing herself as in securing the approbation of others, she yielded to the natural volatility of her spirits, and enjoyed herself with all her might. It did indeed seem, for a time, that the dream of her childish life was realized, and

that some new pleasure was prepared for each succeeding day.

One evening, being early at a party, she retired to a quiet corner, where she could amuse herself by observing the various arrivals, and where a gentleman somewhat past middle life, of pleasant and easy manners, joined her, after conversation with their hostess, whose attention was demanded elsewhere.

"May I take the liberty to fancy myself an acquaintance," said he, smiling, "and ask if weariness has driven you into this solitary corner, to avoid the crowd which will presently throng the rooms?"

"Far from it," replied Mabel; "I am all anticipation yet, for such scenes are new to me."

"Then perhaps you merely design to examine into the nature of the world's pomps and pleasures, before you try your influence in recalling its devotees to the better purpose for which man was made."

"How I shall fall in your estimation by confessing that, on the contrary, I come to be

molded to its fashions, and to adopt all the pleasures it presents to my enjoyment."

"I had not decidedly exalted you to any great elevation, therefore be not alarmed at a fall. But are you satisfied of the reality of what you see? Is it abiding happiness that moves amid these feathery crowds, and sparkles in jewels and flowers to the sounds of mirth and music?"

"I am very happy myself," replied Mabel, laughing; "why should I doubt the happiness of others, or suppose that people meet in masquerade? Pardon me for remarking that your own is the gravest face at this moment in the room, for this, I see, is not your atmosphere for smiles."

"And yet if hearts could be weighed, we might learn a useful lesson. I happened to overhear a remark just now from one of the blandest of the smiling dames before you, which revealed a load of mortification and disappointment. And here also stands a flattering spendthrift, whose chief satisfaction arises from the

fact that he is safe for a few hours from arrest, and may perchance insinuate himself into the favor of some unconscious heiress, whose fortune may restore his ease."

"I must not suppose you speak without knowledge of your subject," said Mabel; "but I may hope that these are two painful exceptions to the rule."

"If you had ever studied the root of that rare and costly plant, 'heart's-ease,' you would not expect to find its flower on thorns, its fruit on thistles," said the stranger.

"Then may I ask why you come among thorns and thistles, when such contact is distasteful to you, and where, if there be pleasure, you cannot realize it?"

"I did not say there is no pleasure; but pleasure is not happiness. Pleasure compared with happiness is as reflection compared with the sun. The one is kindled by favoring circumstances, and lives and dies as the beam is felt or obscured; the other shines on in an uninterrupted peace and beauty, whatever storms may beat

below. Pleasure may be of the earth; happiness can only be of God. But to reply to your inquiry, which proves your respect for consistency, I must inform you that I came as the escort of a friend who is visiting an invalid of the family in her retirement. When she has concluded her visit, we depart together."

"Exulting in your superiority over the gay crowd you leave behind," said Mabel, flippantly.

"On the contrary," said the stranger, kindly, but seriously, "we shall regret that so many, with talents and energies probably superior to our own, should, by the tastes they cultivate and the pursuits they enjoy, prove themselves 'lovers of pleasure more than lovers of God;' and while thankful for the grace that has made us to differ, hope for the time when they also may learn the secret which influences us." And bowing respectfully, he turned away.

Mabel felt depressed for a moment, but rallied to meet an advancing bevy of young ladies.

"A conquest! a conquest!" exclaimed one. "Who would have thought that grave old beau could be overcome at last!"

"Ah, but it is to no purpose," said Miss B., "for Mabel will not capitulate to anything but a coronet, and Mr. Leighton has only a paltry estate in some dreary region where nothing lively and beautiful could exist."

"But he has an inheritance that fadeth not away, and a crown reserved in heaven," said a sweet voice from behind the group. All started, and made way for a graceful-looking young woman, whose modest simplicity of dress and manner contrasted with those of the full-dressed belles around her.

"You here, Dora!" exclaimed several voices at once.

"Yes; I have come to request an introduction to Miss Croyden before I leave, as I have not yet had an opportunity of meeting her."

Miss B. immediately complied, and Mabel was charmed with the appearance of her new acquaintance, and the few words of kindness

she had time to utter. But soon she excused herself, paid her respects to the lady of the mansion, and taking the arm of the extraordinary stranger, they disappeared together.

"Who are they? what are they?" exclaimed Mabel to her young friends.

"They are uncle and niece," replied Miss B. "It is seldom they are to be met anywhere but in some school or alley, where you and I are not likely to seek them. Mr. Leighton is so odd, we are determined to hate him; and so kind, we cannot do it honestly. And Dora is as much his fac-simile as one so thoroughly ladylike can be. They go about the world like spirits whose home is elsewhere, who have an elfish message to deliver, and are gone. But doubtless you had a specimen, Mabel, for I saw Mr. Leighton conversing with you."

"Yes, he almost made me melancholy. Surely, Miss Leighton is considered beautiful, is she not?"

"She is of that opinion herself," said another young lady, who was related to the subject of

discussion. "I said to her once, 'It is too bad that you should be both handsome and rich, when you do not appreciate such possessions. I wish I were equally favored.' She did not even blush, but quietly replied, 'You would then be responsible for two important talents, which should be used for the Giver's glory; but, instead of coveting mine, Clara, think if you are not proportionately endowed with gifts perhaps more valuable in some other way.'"

"Really, what astonishing conceit!" exclaimed one.

"I should never think myself handsome, whatever others might think," cried another.

"You would not let others know your thought, you mean," said Miss B., laughing; "but I will do Miss Leighton the justice to say, that I never heard her accused of pride or affectation, and it surely is affectation to pretend ignorance of what everybody sees to be a fact. Miss Leighton's oddity consists in quiet consciousness of her attractions, without being proud or conceited about them. I would advise

you to get her receipt for this phenomenon, Mabel, before you are spoiled." And, with various feelings, the young party dispersed to their amusements.

"It is very entertaining to hear Miss B. taking the part of my singular cousin," said Clara Gresford to Miss Croyden; "I do not believe she would have done so last season."

"Why not?" asked Mabel, not comprehending the insinuation.

"Do you not observe that she can now afford to be generous and philosophical, and to scatter oracular warnings among her friends?" returned the young lady, smilingly directing Mabel's attention to Miss B., who was at that moment met by several members of the noble family with which she was soon to be connected.

"Such a reason is unnecessary to generous vindication of your interesting cousin," said Mabel, "when it appears that she voluntarily excludes herself from the admiration she deserves. I have seen no one so lovely or so natural since I came to town: she does not

seem to know or to heed who may be observing her; and such dignity and self-possession cannot be the result of habit, because you say she rarely visits in fashionable society. How can she have acquired it?"

"Dora has great depth of character," coldly replied Clara.

"Of what kind, I wonder?" thought Mabel; but she did not press the subject. Clara was right; assuredly Dora had depth of character.

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CHAPTER VI.

DORA LEIGHTON.

Then they that feared the Lord spake often one to another: and the Lord hearkened, and heard, and a book of remembrance was written before him for them that feared the Lord, and that thought upon his name. And they shall be mine, saith the Lord of hosts, in that day when I make up my jewels.—MALACHI iii, 16, 17.

MRS. GRESFORD was a devoted mother. Her children's interests (as she estimated them) were her first and dearest consideration. For their sakes she had declined the amusements and pleasures once enjoyed in the gay world, and been content with the retirement of a country life. But her intention was to train her daughters for the scenes she had abandoned; and, when their education was completed, to seek, in the admiration they would excite, and the advantageous settlements they would attain, the reward of her maternal cares and self-denial.

Her connections were aristocratic, and she had carefully retained a certain hold on those which might advance her hopes; but Mr. Gresford had to toil up the hill of industry before his results would justify a brilliant début; and while he was early and late in the counting-house, his wife was as diligently cultivating in the nursery and school-room the means of dissipating the funds he was so anxiously acquiring.

Two sons had already chosen a military life, and had become as polished and expensive in their tastes as the most aspiring parent could desire: but they were happily ordered abroad before their extravagance could affect their sisters' prospects; and when the completed education of two daughters rendered a tour on the Continent a desirable preparation for introduction to society, Mr. Gresford had just acquired, by means of successful speculation, the appearance of wealth, and the expectation of substantial prosperity. All things favored the long-cherished design, and a handsome house in London was hired for the season. But prior

to the removal of the family, the governess of the two little girls who occupied the school-room was summoned away with little prospect of returning. This was peculiarly unfortunate, for it was not conceivable that Clara and Augusta, with their hands full of invitation cards, and their heads full of finery and conquest, could afford time to correct French exercises, and catechise in history.

In the establishment at Green Lawn dwelt an orphan niece, the only child of Mrs. Gresford's only sister, who, though deemed exceedingly willful and eccentric, was nevertheless harmless and obliging; and in default of a better, she volunteered to preserve order in the school-room until a desirable governess could be obtained: but as she also chose most inopportunely to accompany the family to town, it was necessary to relieve her from her self-imposed office as soon as possible, lest any intrusive friend should question the propriety of her position; and this necessity resulted in the speedy engagement of Miss Severn, and

the removal of the children with their parents, since they could not be confided to the charge of a stranger at home.

One evening, shortly after a few gratifying introductions, the young ladies, dressed for exhibition, broke in upon their cousin's retirement, as she sat reading in a little sitting-room kindly appropriated to her special use, since she seldom visited with them, or joined their gay assemblies at home.

"How dull you must be, Dora!" exclaimed Clara: "I quite pity you. Are you not moped to death?"

"What kind of sensation is that?" asked Dora, smiling.

"Ah, you want to bring us, as usual, to the meaning of things. How shall we expound it, Augusta?"

"O! it begins with feeling dull, then dreamy, yawning, discontented, and ends with being absolutely cross. At least, that *is* my experience," said the young lady, laughing.

"Ah, then, I am safe," replied Dora; "for I

am not likely to be dull with my books, and perhaps Uncle Leighton's company to tea. Then I never dream till I am asleep, and when sleepy I go to bed; so I stand no chance of being moped myself, or of inflicting its cross consequences on others."

"Well, we know you are an oddity, and are privileged to be so if you please. But, Dora, dear," said Clara, "will you do me the great kindness to lend me your cameos again? Mamma has nothing so elegant for me."

"Yes, certainly, if you wish it," said Dora, cheerfully; and having procured them, she returned and clasped a superb set of ornaments round the neck and arms of her cousin, offering a bandeau to Augusta for her head, with which she also was in perfect rapture.

"How very good you are, Dora! You don't know how I was envied the other night, for there was nothing so chastely beautiful in the room."

"Envied!" said Dora, looking up in surprise. "Do you rejoice in exciting envy?"

"Certainly, my dear, for a little while; but, like all ball-room pleasures, it evaporated too soon; so don't look disturbed, my gentle cousin."

"Do not ask me to lend you the cameos again, Clara," said Dora, sadly; and the young ladies, protesting that they knew not "how to touch such tinder," hurried away.

Dora read, and thought, and prayed; and though alone, except in communing with God, was serenely happy. Then noting the hour, she ascended several flights of stairs, and gently opening a bed-room door where all was darkness, she whispered softly, "Are you here yet, dear Helen?"

A voice answered in the same tone:

"Yes, but Miss Emma is not asleep yet, and will not suffer me to leave her."

"Let me take your place, while you go to my room to get warm and comfortable."

"No, no, I won't let her go," said a peevish little voice from the bed; "I like her to sing to me."

Dora took the cold hands of the shivering

Helen to warm them in her own, and well knowing the consequences of resisting the willfulness of the spoiled pet, she sat down by her side, and commenced a low, soft lullaby, which soon had the desired effect; and then she led Helen to her room, and made her sit by the fire, while she busied herself in preparing tea, saying that she expected Mr. Leighton, who had desired her to have some quiet comfort ready for him when he should arrive.

Then taking her Bible, she read aloud the seventeenth chapter of John's Gospel.

"Is it not wonderful, Helen," said she, "that we should be allowed to tread such holy ground; to hear our Lord saying for us, 'Holy Father, keep through thine own name those whom thou hast given me, that they may be one, as we are?' And that prayer is answered to all who love such guardianship."

"And, 'I pray not that thou shouldest take them out of the world, but that thou shouldest keep them from the evil,'" repeated Helen.

whose eyes had filled with tears of gratitude at Dora's true kindness. "Sometimes we forget that part of the prayer, and long for rest away from the evil."

"Yes, but we have also a reason given for the prayer. 'These things speak I in the world, that they might have my joy fulfilled in themselves;' and one deep, pure fountain of his joy, even in the midst of his tribulation, was this: 'I have glorified thee on the earth: I have finished the work which thou gavest me to do.' And it is as true of his people as it was of himself, that God has given them a work to do, that they also may glorify his name on the earth. I sometimes tremble lest in my interest in some things more than in others I should mistake my work, and please only myself, when I should be seeking first my Father's glory. You, dear Helen, have no difficulties of this kind."

"No; I see my present duties clearly, and have only to seek grace and self-denial to do them as unto my Lord, and not merely unto my employers."

"If employers did but know what gainers they are by religious principle," remarked Dora, "Christ's followers would be sought rather than avoided for posts of responsible duty, where the interests of one person are thrown upon the in tegrity of another."

"What are you moralizing about, young ladies?" demanded Mr. Leighton, hearing, as he entered the room, the conclusion of Dora's little speech.

"Only a point on which we are sure of your concurrence, dear uncle," said Dora, as she repeated the observation.

"But I must add a word on behalf of the world," said Mr. Leighton, after kindly greeting Helen, and seating himself at Dora's comfortable tea-table. "I have observed that the world has no objection to be served in offices of trus by Christian people, if we will only confine our religion to the strict and faithful discharge of the mere drudgery without interfering with motives, or desiring to serve souls. But the world has a just contempt for profession unsustained

by consistency of practice, and rightly concludes that the man who dares so to trifle with sacred things will not be scrupulous with regard to the temporal interests confided to his care. It is quite possible for people to respect consistency which condemns them, and to lavish indignation upon the counterfeit without desiring to possess the reality. How solemn, then, is the duty of those who love the Lord Jesus Christ in sincerity to be true to his service first, that they may prove to every observer the power of the principles which actuate them, and, however deceitful the mere profession, that there is a living reality in Christian faith, and a witness for God's glory in Christian conduct. And now, why do you not ask me the news, seeing that I have been busy in the world to-day?"

"Well, then, what news?" asked Dora.

"Funds are down, I'm sorry to say."

"But what funds?" said Dora, looking archly at Helen.

"The funds of the society, Dora, about which we have been so much interested lately. It is

not popular; it demands prayer and faith as well as money, and will have little to show until we find its result and reward in heaven. That it will have results we know, for God's word never went forth void; it must accomplish tha whereto he sends it."

"We must think about this," said Dora, "and try what we can do in deeper earnest. But I am anxious to know now how you succeed in your home missionary work, I mean your idea of seizing every opportunity, wherever you are, of speaking a word to draw attention to Christ and his Gospel."

"I have been trying to act it out to-day, Dora; but if you hear of my apprehension as a monomaniac, you must not be surprised, for it is an absolute affront to compel people to remember that their bodies are mortal, and their souls the eternal principle for which their first, best care is needful."

"They said Christ had a devil, and was mad," said Dora; "and the servant must not be above his Lord, you know."

"I am aware that the manner of doing it may be objectionable, and would cultivate more earnestly the meekness and gentleness of Christ. But my failures have been far more numerous than my encouragements. First, having to wait for the committee, I wandered up and down the street in preference to sitting still, and observed the address on some of the living epistles that rushed or strolled along. I gazed and read till the desire grew strong within me to challenge the passing souls like a sentinel on duty, and to see 'who is on the Lord's side.' A young man stopped, opportunely, at a bookseller's window, where a pile of Bibles lay prominently in view. I ventured a remark. He gazed inquisitively in my face and said, 'Do you believe that book is true?' 'I *know* it is true,' said I, 'and having in possession an earnest of the full blessing it promises, I desire that my fellow-creatures should be fellow-heirs of my glorious hope.' 'Sir,' said he, 'I think you do believe it, and whether I agree with you or not, I honor your zeal and sincerity in speaking to

me. If those who profess to believe as you do acted out their faith, the world might be compelled to believe that there is reality in religion.' I would gladly have detained him in conversation, but he bowed and passed on.

"Then a gentleman in apparent haste pushed somewhat rudely against me, which seeming to feel, he turned and begged pardon. 'Diligence in business demands no apology,' said I; 'may your object be worthy of your speed.' 'My object,' said he, 'is to attend to my own business and leave other people to attend to theirs;' and looking back with a significant air, he also passed on.

"Just afterward a collision took place between two youths, who could not have been quite attending to their business, for one was carrying a basket of plants, the other a bundle of papers. I assisted to gather up the scattered papers, and to re-arrange the shaken plants, and thus prevented an angry dispute between them, while speaking of the love of God in Christ in receiving and forgiving sinners. They both ac

cepted a tract, and went good-humoredly on their way.

"I spent a little time in observing a miserable object, a thorough-going beggar by trade, who asked alms of every one who passed him; and while all seemed disgusted or annoyed, it struck me that no one took the trouble to reprove or instruct him. So I resolved to speak kindly and seriously to him, since it is useless to complain of what we make no effort to rectify. I told him that I was a beggar too, but I always begged of One who never refused my petition, and directed him to the Friend who, if sought 'first,' adds all other things to those who seek him. And so I went on, in season and out of season, because souls are perishing through ignorance and negligence of Christ, and because so many are pursuing an object in life without reference to God or his glory. But it is painful and humiliating to find that dear name which is above every name so strange and unwelcome a sound in the world that 'God so loved.'"

"That is true indeed, but it must stimulate

rather than discourage us, dear uncle. 'In the morning sow thy seed, and in the evening withhold not thine hand: for thou knowest not whether shall prosper, either this or that, or whether they both shall be alike good.'"

"Thank you, my dear niece, for that remembrance. And now let me hear of Miss Severn's family, your brother and sister, my dear young friend; have you better news concerning them?"

"They remain in the same state as when I left home," said Helen. "I was just tracing the points of resemblance between you and my dear father: you both enjoy the same faith, and are ruled by the same motive, but you are glorifying God in prosperity and happiness, he in adversity and trial."

"Ah, Helen! you do not know," said Dora, quickly.

"No, Dora, she does not; but allowing her remark to be correct, are not all God's children placed by his providence in the position where they may best accomplish the object for which

they are designed? The Christian calling is independent of place, position, and circumstance, except as He who calls furnishes opportunity to obey. On the renewed heart of every believer lies a duty, as unconditional as the mercy from which it is deduced, and it is this: 'Ye are not your own; for ye are bought with a price; *therefore* glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God's.' Here is practical Christianity resolved into one simple proposition for faith to believe in, and love to work out. Your dear parents, my young friend, in their trials, have opportunities for this duty, which only God could appoint, and in which he accepts its performance with watchful tenderness that will never suffer them to be tempted beyond that they are able to bear; and you, surely you feel that you are developing, in your patient course of self-denying love, fruits of his Spirit which would not have grown on the unpruned branch."

Helen's heart fully responded; and while with grateful love she praised God for his mer-

cies, "How thankless, how unbelieving I have been," thought she; "how little I expected to find friends like these in my new and worldly home?"

And ere the little party separated they knelt in praise and prayer; and, refreshed and comforted, each according to their need, retired in possession of that calm enduring peace which is only to be imbibed at one hallowed source, and which, once tasted, invites renewed desires, never to be unsatisfied, never to exhaust the infinite supply.

CHAPTER VII.

DORA'S ORNAMENTS.

I said in mine heart, Go to now, I will prove thee with mirth, therefore enjoy pleasure.—Ecclesiastes ii, 1.

One morning Miss Croyden called in high spirits at Mr. Gresford's, and was received with much pleasure by the sisters. Her errand, however, was especially to Clara.

"I am delighted to find you at home," said she, "for I have a favor to beg. I must tell you first that I am the most fortunate creature in the world, for I have secured what a multitude of ladies would be charmed to obtain if they could. I think I told you that all mamma's jewelry was stolen, and I would not permit papa to replace it, but he said I might at any time ask him to purchase whatever took my fancy that was really good. Now I never did see anything

very captivating, or perfectly chaste and unique, to my taste, until I saw your beautiful cameos, Miss Gresford; and at Mrs. B.'s jeweler's the other morning, while looking about, I carelessly opened a case, where, to my joy and surprise, lay a superb set, as much like yours, I should think, as can possibly be made. The jeweler did not intend, I thought, to exhibit them, and said there was nothing like them in London, and that he wished to show them to my lady somebody; but I resolved to have them, and insisted on his putting them aside while I wrote to papa; for the price was rather startling. However, with his approval, to-day I have been for them, and here they are. Now will you permit me to compare them with yours?"

During this eager speech Clara underwent some unpleasant sensations, but recovering herself she hastened to her cousin's room.

"Cousin Dora," said she, "will you kindly send your cameos for Miss Croyden to look at? She thinks she has purchased some like them."

"Is Miss Croyden here?" said Dora, with

something less than her usual calmness; "I should like to see her. Let us talk about something better than dress and visits, Clara."

"But she will expect to see the ornaments dear; so give them to me while you are thinking about coming down."

"My dear Clara, I cannot give them to you," said Dora, seriously.

"O, do not talk nonsense, Dora. I shall be hurt and offended if you do not oblige Miss Croyden."

"I will come and apologize to her for not producing them."

"O no, no, not for the world: if you will not show them, say nothing on the subject. It is a pity your religion does not prevent you from being unkind and selfish, especially to those with whom you have found a home. The fact is, Miss Croyden supposes the cameos are mine, and I did not deny it. Do you still refuse them to save me from seeming to have deceived her?"

"Seeming!" said Dora. "O Clara! straightforward, transparent truth in everything is the

way to preserve peace and self-respect in our dealings with each other. Be assured I would not have refused you if I had the ornaments now; but I have not, and beg you will not name them again."

Clara was perfectly bewildered, and nothing but her own share in the matter prevented her from flying to Miss Croyden with the history of her suspicions, in revenge for this unexpected annoyance. As it was, she sent a message after Dora, requesting her to entertain Miss Croyden, as Mrs. Gresford required her own attendance without delay.

In the meantime Mabel had displayed her prize on the table, and Dora, without noticing the subject, was endeavoring to get beyond the chit-chat of a morning call, when Mr. Leighton was announced.

His eye rested on the jewels, and Mabel instantly demanded his opinion of them.

"They are perfect of their kind," said he; "I never saw but one set like them."

"Ah, they must be Miss Gresford's; but I

fear she is not able to let us compare them this morning."

"Allow me to close the cases for you," said Dora. "And now come, dear uncle, as I am to have the pleasure of Miss Croyden's visit, let us find some subject of mutual interest on which to converse."

"Let it be of a friend, then," said Mabel. "How is Helen Severn? and how does she perform the part of governess?"

"Admirably," said Dora, warmly. "She is indeed a friend, my valued friend. Her self-denying, unostentatious piety is a dayly lesson to me."

"Ah, but you would not be surprised that she is so amiable and good if you knew the family. They are all alike; it seems to be their peculiar constitution, I think."

"You seem to appreciate their excellence, whatever be the cause of it. But have you never traced it higher than constitutional amiability?" asked Mr. Leighton.

"Ah, now you are on Mr. Severn's favorite

ground," replied Mabel; "and to confess the truth, I have always disliked to hear him speak of himself and his family as if they had been sinners; for if they needed conversion, as they call it, what do some other's need?"

"Simply the same conversion," replied Mr Leighton; "a new principle to conquer and keep in check the old nature."

"I suspected that you held his opinions, but I find nothing of the kind among the gay, pleasant people with whom I associate now, and I began to hope that I should prove Mr. Severn mistaken; and that, with the exception of his own family, it is only disappointed people, or sick and poor people, or old and ugly people, who have nothing else to console them, to whom such views are acceptable."

"We are delighted to assist you in correcting an error so candidly expressed," said Mr. Leighton; "since you may observe we are not sick, nor poor, nor disappointed, nor very old."

"But rich, in health, happy, and not ugly," said Mabel, laughing. "I cannot understand it."

"Do not, therefore, discard us. Perhaps, if you should ever need a disinterested friend, you will find that those whose trust is in Christ's merits rather than in their own, will better supply your need than the gay, pleasant people to whom you alluded just now."

"But why cannot one be kind, and good, and yet gay and happy?"

"Worldly people are not happy. There is no element of happiness in their pursuits. Their aim is to please themselves, and happiness is not in self. Look into your own heart and see if it be there."

"I am very happy in myself," said Mabel, "and I accept all the pleasure that seems consistent with my age and station."

"You have not then been driven into self; your gayety is perhaps thoughtlessness, and I should like, in the course of another three months, to repeat my question."

"What, then, is happiness?" said Mabel, interested notwithstanding her prejudices.

"I derive it from God's word, and my own experience echoes the fact, to be this; namely, to realize the purpose of existence and to follow it. Sin is the origin of human misery, and forgiveness of sin is the first step toward the recovery of happiness. Forgiveness of sin excites gratitude, gratitude prompts to love and service, and the love and service of God promote his glory and secure our happiness. The pardon is in Jesus Christ. The application of it to the conscience is by the Holy Spirit; and with an everliving Advocate in heaven, and an indwelling Guide, Friend, and Comforter on earth, what can really disturb our peace? Hell has no terrors, death no sting, sorrow no despair. Now tell me, is this the happiness you find around you in the world?"

"On the contrary, we do not hint at subjects supposed to be so gloomy and disturbing," replied Mabel.

"And seek happiness in keeping as far as

possible aloof from God, who nevertheless must some day be met. It is possible to rush gayly through time without him, but eternity without him must be unutterable wretchedness."

"O, I cannot think that worldly people, as you call us, live in forgetfulness of God. We worship him on Sunday surely."

"You deceive yourselves into that idea; but those who worship God 'must worship him in spirit and in truth.' His word, however, is sufficiently explanatory of the characteristics of those who think of him to good purpose. Let us apply one or two tests, which will prevent all misunderstanding on a point so important. Do you believe that the Lord Jesus Christ is the Saviour of all who are or shall be saved?"

"Certainly I do; I have learned that from the Bible, if I have not learned much besides."

"Well, then, we read that 'there is now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus,' that is, who 'believe' in Christ, 'put on' Christ, renouncing all self-confidence and self-righteous-

ness, and confiding wholly in his merits and righteousness for pardon and acceptance with God, 'who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit;' 'for as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God.' How stands the world in this respect? Are you led by the Spirit of God into scenes where the name and religion of Jesus would be, as you just admitted, resented as gloomy and disturbing?"

Mabel was silent.

"Again, the Apostle Peter writes, 'Unto you, therefore, which believe Christ is precious.' It is a powerful word. May I ask, Is he precious to you? Is he precious to your gay and pleasant friends? Once more—"

"O, cease, I pray you," exclaimed Mabel; "I am condemned by texts like these. But are you right? Are these the only proofs of being safe from God's displeasure?"

"Search and see, like a lady of Berea, and be assured that if escape from punishment be your only idea of salvation, you have realized nothing of the love of Christ, you have not

tasted that God is gracious; and bear with me if I add in faithfulness yet in tenderness, you cannot be in Christ Jesus, and must therefore be under condemnation."

"O, but this is dreadful! I cannot believe it."

"That is not a wise reason for unbelief," said Mr. Leighton, kindly.

"Miss Leighton," said Mabel, "is this your religion? Is Christ precious in this sense to you? you, whose fortune, and station, and attractions may command the respect and admiration of the world, do you renounce it for his sake?"

"I answer unhesitatingly to your appeal, dear Miss Croyden," said Dora. "Christ is precious to me, so precious that I cannot mingle in, or find congeniality with, a world that I see to be at enmity against him. To feel that he is my loving, faithful, and eternal friend, and to offer him the affectionate service of my life, is the highest happiness I can attain on earth. I would say with our poet:

'From Thee is all that soothes the life of man,
His high endeavor, and his glad success,
His strength to suffer and his will to serve.
But O, thou bounteous Giver of all good,
Thou art of all thy gifts thyself the crown;
Give what thou canst, without thee we are poor;
And with thee rich, take what thou wilt away.'"

"You are extraordinary people," said Mabel, after a pause; "and if I stay with you I shall be frightened out of my amusements and pleasures." And with mingled reverence and levity she departed.

"Dora," said Mr. Leighton, as his niece was leaving the room, "come back and tell me about those ornaments. Do I judge rightly that they are connected with your gift to the failing funds of which I spoke to you recently?"

"They are, dear uncle. I had that and another most urgent cause laid close at my heart; Mr. Gresford refused me any advance unless I could show that the sum for which I asked was to be expended on my own personal wants. I knew that you had done your utmost for the present, and indeed, dear uncle, it

seemed for several reasons my duty to make an effort at once. If you desire it, I will explain all."

"But you valued those cameos, Dora."

"Of course I did. They were a present from my father, and they are beautiful. I am not a savage, you know, uncle," she added, smiling, "to disregard the beautiful either in nature or art; but shall I always offer unto my Lord of that only which costs me nothing?"

"My noble girl," thought Mr. Leighton, "God's workmanship in Christ Jesus: would there were more like thee!"

Poor Clara had sat all this time sulkily ruminating on her mortifying position, and wondering if it were possible that her cousin could have sold the ornaments. It, however, appeared clearly that they were not to be lent again, and it was most provoking to be deprived of them just now. "I detest being obliged to care whether people admire or not," thought Clara; "but I must until I am independent of them, and then, ah then, I will be

revenged by setting some hideous fashion, for the very pleasure of making people whom I despise in my heart ridiculous!"

Mabel wore her much-admired ornaments, and dressed and visited, was flattered and caressed, and supposed herself happy. But it was evident that any trifle had power to irritate and annoy her. A dress was delayed, and a message of excuse arrived, pleading for time, as some of the young people of the milliner's establishment were disabled by illness. "I must have it," said Mabel, in alarm; "it is quite impossible to do without it, and I desire that it may be sent home at the time for which it was promised." She little suspected the consequences of this thoughtless and unfeeling command. But it was obeyed, and a smile of triumph played on her countenance, as she gazed upon her figure arrayed for an important assembly.

"Why," thought she, "should I distress myself with such thoughts as those strange people suggested the other day? No; I will enjoy

myself while I can." And she did so abundantly, after the world's fashion. But, on her return home that night, she was shocked at her pale and spiritless face; her head ached, and, throwing the beautiful dress carelessly aside, she gladly sought her pillow, but she could not rest. Morning found her still feverish and uneasy, and the day wore heavily away, until Mrs. B., in some anxiety, sent for the family physician.

A few days afterward, on hearing from some visitor that Miss Croyden was indisposed, Dora intimated her intention of calling on her.

"I hope, my dear, you will do nothing of the kind," said Mrs. Gresford, "at least not until we know the nature of the illness. Suppose it should be something infectious."

"I will call first to inquire," said Mr. Leighton, smiling.

But Clara's arrival at the moment decided the point, as she proclaimed the painful inform-

ation that Mabel Croyden was attacked with small-pox.

"And Mrs. B. and her daughter have provided a nurse, and gone out of town," added Clara.

"Then is she left with strangers?" asked Dora, in astonishment.

"It appears so," said Clara; "but it seems exceedingly unkind in her friends to leave the house. They might surely have remained without feeling obliged to attend upon her."

"I do not wonder at it," said Mrs. Gresford; "it is a frightful disorder. Doubtless she will get through it, though of course she must suffer by such an ordeal."

"My informant was told by the servant of whom she inquired," added Clara, "that Miss Croyden asked if her cousin would go to her; and when informed that she had left home, she was extremely distressed, and said she had no friend in the world but her father, for whom she ordered them to send immediately."

"Poor child!" said Mr. Leighton; "would it not be kind in you to go to her, Clara? you seemed very warm friends."

An exclamation of horror and indignation followed this appeal, and it was some time before Mrs Gresford and her daughters recovered the shock of such a suggestion.

"But," said they, "it was just like one of Mr. Leighton's extraordinary propositions; he seems to think people ought to exhaust themselves and their property for the benefit of others; as if each person had not a special duty to perform to him or herself, and to a station in society."

In the course of an hour or two, Dora Leighton sought Helen in the school-room.

"Dear Helen," said she, "I am come to say farewell to you for a short time, and to beg that you will use my room, books, music, anything you like, in my absence; and if Uncle Leighton should come when my aunt and cousins are absent, that you will make his tea, and be Dora to him for me."

"Dear Miss Leighton," asked Helen, in surprise, "are you leaving town, and alone?"

"No; I am only going to prove, if I can, that the love of Jesus is more trustworthy than the love of ourselves, to one who is just now friendless."

"God will bless you, Dora, and make you to that one what you have been to me," said Helen, warmly.

Mr. Leighton was pacing Dora's sitting-room, in some little anxiety, when she entered.

"My dear child," said he, tenderly, "have you well considered this step? You are not called to it to justify any extravagant professions of friendship."

"I have considered it, uncle, and I am assured that it is right. Miss Croyden feels the want of a faithful friend, and on the influence exerted now the tenor of her future life may depend, if she is spared; and if not, O, uncle! who there would speak to her of Jesus and salvation? I must, I ought to go."

And with his consent and blessing she

went, leaving a note of explanation for her aunt.

Her conduct was discussed in the evening circle with considerable animation and freedom. Mrs. Gresford expatiated on the preposterous folly of such uncalled-for interference, and had no doubt of Mrs. B.'s intense annoyance and indignation. "But," added she, "it is useless to advise Dora; nothing deters her from the prosecution of a purpose on which she has once decided."

"I wonder exceedingly that she ventures so to peril her own health and beauty," remarked a visitor.

"She counted the cost," said Mr. Leighton, "and whatever be the result, she will have performed a Christian duty, and one which any censurer present would thankfully accept under similar circumstances. We often hear of disinterestedness and good works, where we do not too frequently witness their performance; and though the world is liberal of commendation when some romantic effort of benevolence,

springing from excited feelings or mere natural impulse, surprises the selfish apathy of society, yet it cannot but be remarked, that when identified with evangelical religion, and enforced as evidences of living faith in the Saviour of sinners, their value is depreciated and their motive suspected."

"You may find such actions set forth as the very pride and glory of the Church of Rome," said Mrs. Gresford; "yet we know you do not approve the creed which inculcates them."

"You describe them correctly as the 'pride and glory' of the Church of Rome," said Mr. Leighton; "for their origin is in a fundamental error, and has no connection with the glory and honor of God. On the contrary, they are exalted as a ground of merit before him in disregard of a truth, which was settled by the death of Christ once and forever. 'Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us.' But self-denial in the path that God's providence seems to dictate, and perseveringly followed from the active

principle of love to the Saviour, is one of the noblest and rarest of the Christian virtues."

"We need only mention Dora to kindle your eloquence," said Mrs. Gresford, sarcastically; "but she is not faultless, after all, Mr. Leighton. I have been extremely pained by some recent indications of a mercenary character."

"I do not consider her faultless. Perfection never visited our fallen world but once, and then envy crucified it," replied Mr. Leighton, quietly. "But I should scarcely have expected such a charge at the head of Dora's list of failings. May I beg to know the proofs?"

"O, it is no secret, I assure you! She has actually sold her ornaments, her father's gift; and I cannot help feeling exceedingly disgraced by such conduct. You see your religion does not keep you from the love of money, after all."

"Poor Dora! what a pity she should foster such self-delusion," said Clara Gresford, in a melancholy tone.

"Is this your view also of Dora's conduct?"

asked Mr. Leighton, looking steadily into Mr. Gresford's countenance, who had sat listening without taking any part in the conversation

"I—I—really I have not troubled myself about it," said he, somewhat taken by surprise; "but I should rather have supposed that Dora is a little inclined to extravagance, if her fault lies either way. I have sometimes found it necessary to restrain her expenditure a little, fearing that she does not know the value of money."

"Well, I doubt not that we shall hear of Dora's cameos again," said Mr. Leighton, "when all secrets are revealed, and dross is separated from pure gold. Until then she must wait for her ornaments."

CHAPTER VIII.

MABEL CROYDEN'S SICKNESS.

The voice said, Cry. And he said, What shall I cry? All flesh is grass, and all the goodliness thereof is as the flower of the field: the grass withereth, the flower fadeth.—ISAIAH xl, 6–8.

WHEN Dora presented herself to ask admission to the suffering Mabel, she was received by the nurse with mingled pleasure and surprise.

"Dear me, miss!" she exclaimed, "do you really mean it?"

"I do indeed," said Dora; "and shall be thankful if you permit me to be useful to you."

"I shall be very glad to have you here, ma'am; for though it is of course my business yet it is much more satisfactory to have some friend of the family to share one's responsibility. And, poor thing, she seemed to want some one

who loves her, though she won't know you yet. And if you follow my directions, and take proper care, I don't think you will suffer any harm."

And Dora sat by the pillow where the ravages of disease were rapidly advancing, and where, in the restlessness of fever, the plaintive moan of one who supposed herself deserted thrilled to her affectionate heart, and redoubled her watchful care.

"She rambles very much to-day," said the nurse; "but when the disease is quite out she will be better."

Dora was anxious for this crisis, and took every opportunity to soothe the sufferer with assurances of care and love, and to read or sing as she seemed most conscious of the effect. At last she spoke in her own natural voice, with collectedness and intelligence.

"You were singing just now, nurse," said she; "what a sweet voice you have! Let me hear it again."

"Me! bless your dear heart, I sing like the croak of an old raven."

"No, no, I like it; sing again," said Mabel, impatiently.

Dora signed the nurse to silence, and sang again for some time.

"Thank you, nurse; it is so sweet. But I must be better now. What has been the matter with me?"

"You have been very ill, and are still weak, dear young lady; but now you are doing nicely, and will soon be well."

"And is no one here but you? Have all my friends forsaken me? Where is my father?"

"You have a kind friend here, who helps me to nurse you, but you must be very calm and quiet for some days yet, and not talk much to her."

"Ah, it must be Helen. Will she come again? But I cannot see you, nurse; I wish it was daylight. Be sure to tell me when Helen comes again."

"It is not Helen, dear Mabel," said Dora, tenderly. "She prays for you, and hears of you dayly, but she could not be allowed to

come. It is Dora who has ventured to intrude upon you when she heard you were ill."

"Dora! Dora Leighton! Is it possible? How strange, when I had no claim upon her, but have rather treated her with rudeness and neglect, because she was so very good."

And obeying Dora's entreaty to be very calm and still, Mabel remained silent for some time; but the tears were in her eyes, and she made an effort to press the gentle hand that smoothed her pillow.

"Nurse," said she, suddenly.

"What can I do for you, dear Mabel?" asked Dora; "nurse is gone out of the room."

"Is she? I thought it was night. Then something is the matter with my eyes; I cannot see anything distinctly."

"It will all pass away as you gain strength. Do not be anxious about it," said Dora.

"Tell me what it is; I implore you to tell me, Dora."

The nurse at this moment returned; and alarmed at the excited tone of the entreaty,

"Dear miss," said she, "you must not move or excite yourself; you are much better, and now it depends on your own patience and quietness to escape the marks of smallpox."

"Smallpox!" shrieked Mabel in horror, her whole frame trembling with agitation.

"Yes; dear me, but I cannot tell what may happen if you continue to distress yourself in this way."

All attempts to comfort or control were useless; and Mabel, yielding to her bitter distress, only spoke to check the voice of kindness, and to entreat that she might die. Her frantic excitement threatened a return of the worst features of her malady; and having tried all that tenderness and endearment could effect, Dora felt constrained to adopt a different tone.

"Mabel," said she, "you shock and disappoint me beyond measure with this unholy temper, and are depriving yourself of the hope of recovery."

"That is just what I wish; I do not hope or desire to recover."

"Dare you presume to throw away your life, a gift for which you are solemnly responsible to Him who gave it?"

"Do not reason with me; we have no common ground. Why were not you visited with such a judgment instead of me, when you would have borne it so meekly? Why am I doomed to a fate so dreadful?"

"'Who art thou that repliest against God? Shall the thing formed say to him that formed it, Why hast thou made me thus?'"

Mabel returned no answer, but wept and moaned incessantly, until serious fears arose for the life of which she seemed now utterly regardless.

Some time afterward, her sight being sufficiently restored, she desired that a looking-glass might be brought, a request that Dora gently and firmly resisted.

"I will be your mirror, dear Mabel," said she, "and your own hands could not have arranged your appearance more comfortably than nurse and I have done it. We wish you

to wait a little longer, that you may be the more gratified to find how greatly your fears have exaggerated the facts of your case."

"Ah, you only say that to silence and comfort me, but I know I must be hateful to behold."

"I would not utter an untruth to comfort you, dear Mabel; but I believe that to view the present change would distress you needlessly, while time and patience will do much toward the removal of the cause of distress; and I yet hope that you will have reason to acknowledge some blessing even in this trial and illness."

"Tell me now, Dora, if this had occurred to you—"

"It may occur to her yet, dear young lady," said the nurse, kindly, "and will if she stays so long in this room. Indeed, Miss Croyden, you must not keep her from taking air and exercise."

"Dear, kind Dora!" said Mabel, "I never thought until this moment of the risk you have incurred for me. O, how selfish I have been! However frightful the external appearance, it cannot exceed the deformity you have found

within. Go now at once, and do not return until it will be safe for you to do so. And yet, Dora, what shall I do without you?"

Dora having tenderly assured her of a speedy return, left the room, to walk out according to the nurse's wish. But on her reappearance she was shocked to find that a serious relapse had taken place, and the nurse in great alarm had sent for medical assistance.

It seemed that Mabel, deeming the opportunity favorable, had found some pretext on which to dismiss her attendant, and had contrived to reach a mirror, where the contrast which met her gaze, to the fair and blooming face on which she had last looked with pride and exultation, proved too severe a shock, and she was found senseless on the ground.

And now, the life of which the unhappy girl had recently been so careless was indeed endangered, not by the natural course of disease, but by her own willful fault, and more than ever anxious was the task of her watchful and attentive friend.

"Dora," said she, "I am very ill. Do you know whether I am in danger?"

"It is feared so, dear Mabel, and I dare not deceive you; but nothing is impossible with God.'

Mabel shuddered, and drawing Dora close, with a great effort she whispered, "I dare not die. I madly wished it lately, but now that it is real, I am terrified. O, pray that I may at least have time, until I am fit to go. Dora, ask, pray. O that I may not die yet; it is too awful!"

With earnest affection Dora complied with this request, and the sufferer was calmed. Day after day she urged her petition, and once more was pronounced convalescent, while in patience and obedience she followed every injunction calculated to promote recovery; and even when leaning on Dora's arm she was able again to move, she forbore to approach the mirror, a former glance into which had so nearly proved fatal.

"I remember being about to ask you, Dora," said she, one day, as they paced the room to-

gether, "what would be your feeling if a calamity like mine had been sent to you?"

"I dare not speak positively, because I have not been tried," said Dora; "but as I know that many sorrows and trials may arise on my way through life, I have so entirely committed myself to my heavenly Father's care, and feel so assured of his wisdom and love, that I hope to receive any chastisement he may see it needful to inflict, with humble desire to learn the lesson it is intended to teach, and in any trial of my faith to find that as my day so shall my strength be."

"And would you not murmur to become a frightful thing like me, after being—" Mabel paused and hesitated.

"After being flattered into an undue estimate of my attractions?" said Dora, smiling. "Perhaps I might regret it, but I should know that what God made he has a right to alter, and that some better purpose would be answered by the change than I had accomplished by the original. Pardon me, dear Mabel, if I add that

your loss, if such it prove after all, will be richly compensated in the loveliness of Christ's likeness in your character, if you do not reject the voice that calls you to his love and service."

"Ah, you have such an obstinate determination to rest in God's love, while I see only judgment and anger in his dealings with me. This does not seem the way to win my love, or even to constrain my obedience, for I feel susceptible only to kindness and indulgence."

"You have been treated with kindness and indulgence for years, Mabel, and have just tried the gay world, of which your imagination had sketched such glowing pictures. What progress have you made toward God in the enjoyments which have surrounded you?"

Mabel was silent for a time, and Dora did not interrupt her meditations.

"Were you never gratified at the admiration of the world?" at last she abruptly asked.

"I was in danger," replied Dora; "but God in mercy withdrew me from its hollow flatteries, and obliged me to listen to a faithful voice

that spoke of the deformities within. So may it be with you."

"But you were not startled by a shock like mine."

"No, I had a loss more irreparable than tha of beauty."

Poor Mabel could imagine nothing so distressing, but the tears had filled Dora's eyes, and she forbore to question.

"I lost my father, Mabel," resumed Dora, "and such a father as child is seldom blessed with. You have seen my dear uncle Leighton, who greatly resembles him. It was on my father's death-bed that his prayers for me were answered, and he fell asleep in the happy assurance that I had found, through grace and love, a Father in heaven."

"I have sometimes wondered that you were not consigned to Mr. Leighton's exclusive guardianship, rather than to that of Mr. and Mrs. Gresford," said Mabel, who desired to di vert the mind of her friend from what she sup posed must be a painful theme.

"The arrangement was almost inevitable," replied Dora. "Uncle Leighton was in India, and my mother's sister seemed the suitable protectress of an orphan girl; while my property, as well as my brother's, was consigned in trust to her husband until Mark's majority, when we shall be at liberty to choose our future home. Mrs. Gresford then resided in retirement, which was also in accordance with my preferences; and she has most kindly permitted me to follow my own inclinations with regard to society, since she has mixed with the gay world."

"I imagine it is not difficult to penetrate into the reason for that indulgence," said Mabel, sarcastically.

"I see in it the consideration and kindness I desire," replied Dora, quietly. "My aunt's ideas and mine do not always harmonize; but I value what is valuable in her, and hope still for something better in time."

Mrs. B. had not thought proper to inform Mr. Croyden of his daughter's illness until she was convalescent; and since Mabel's terrific vision

in the mirror, she had expressed no wish for his presence. But now that change of air and scene became desirable, his arrival was dayly expected, to conduct her wherever her fancy or caprice might dictate. And as the ladies could not be expected to return to the infected atmosphere, Dora was prevailed on to remain, until his presence should relieve her from her long and anxious charge.

CHAPTER IX.

DORA UNDER TRIALS.

Lo, this is the man that made not God his strength; but trusted in the abundance of his riches.—PSALM liii, 7.

But the salvation of the righteous is of the Lord: he is their strength in the time of trouble.—PSALM xxxvii, 39.

THE family party at Mr. Gresford's had not dispersed after a late breakfast one morning, when Mr. Leighton called. He was a privileged guest; and being reputed rich, a connection of Mrs. Gresford's by marriage, and Dora's uncle, he came and went as he pleased; and his plain speeches were endured or laughed off with good-humored indifference, while his kindness and cheerfulness secured him the ready welcome of the younger members of the family.

Mr. Gresford was reading the morning news, Mrs. Gresford was considering some invitations

which had just arrived, and her daughters having given their opinions and preferences on the same, were lounging in fashionable indolence, while deciding on the occupations of the day; as if the world were a vast play-ground, time all play-hours, and life a game, now exciting and delightful, now dull and wearisome, as the mood of the players might be.

"Shall we practice that duet a little?" asked Augusta; "for if we have to sing this evening, I should like to accomplish it somewhat better than the Misses E."

"Yes, if you like," replied Clara; "but I shall not sing unless some people worth the trouble happen to be present. It is unnecessary to be too obliging. But here comes Uncle Leighton; and what exquisite flowers he brings! O, uncle! are those for us?"

"Yes, if you like them. Are they not more interesting than your artificial ornaments?"

"Infinitely, provided you assure me they contain no grubs and earwigs," replied Clara,

laughing, as she proceeded to divide the beautiful group into two bouquets.

"I should like to attach a condition to them though, Clara," said Mr. Leighton: "it is, that after they have faded, you contemplate them in connection with the statement you will find on the scroll which supports them."

"Ah, I shall be faded enough myself, and half asleep by that time; but I would perform a more difficult penance for such rare treasures as these."

Clara glanced at the inscription, "1 Peter i, 24, 25." "Just like Uncle Leighton," whispered she to her sister. "And now, can you tell us how Miss Croyden is recovering from her illness, uncle?"

"Very happily, I believe. Her father is expected shortly; and they propose a tour on the Continent for the complete restoration of her health."

"Is she much disfigured? I suppose she is not likely to appear in company again for some time," said Mrs. Gresford.

"I trust a few months will completely restore her to health, and bloom, and a right mind," replied Mr. Leighton.

"Her right mind!" exclaimed all the ladies at once. "Is she then deranged? How closely they have managed to keep the dreadful secret!"

"She makes distressing and absurd mistakes about the value and position of things; but that is a common kind of lunacy. I hope, however, Miss Croyden's will prove to be only temporary insanity."

"She knew the value of things when she seized upon Dora's cameos," said Clara, satirically.

"Well, she still values things fleeting and temporal more than things enduring and eternal. She still mistakes the real and worthy object of life, and is longing for happiness, yet spends her money for that which is not bread and which satisfies not. This is madness and delusion."

"Perhaps Dora may find her a tractable convert now," remarked Mrs. Gresford.

"I came to speak to you about Dora," said Mr. Leighton. "You know, Mark is returning to England at this time, in order that he and Dora may celebrate their majority together; and if you do not object, we will hold the day in all due honor at Leighton Manor."

"I shall not make any objection, I assure you," said Mrs. Gresford: "in fact, I think your idea highly suitable, because, since Dora has chosen the office of sick nurse, she must excuse me from receiving her into the family direct from the neighborhood of pestilence."

"Then if we go at once, perhaps you will all follow us as soon as you think we have performed proper quarantine," said Mr. Leighton, with a smile.

"It is not at all necessary that we should go," said Mrs. Gresford; "you know our authority and guardianship will have ceased." And she looked toward her husband for assistance.

"I think if we are invited we certainly ought to go," said Mr. Gresford. "What is your objection?"

"I have several objections. It would inconvenience me excessively; and I do not consider that Dora's deference to my wishes demands such a sacrifice," replied the lady, decisively.

"My dear, you speak hastily. I can remember many occasions on which Dora has greatly obliged you, but few, if any, wherein she has opposed your wishes."

"Possibly, because I have not thought it necessary to disturb you with them. But she has many quiet ways of being self-willed and disobliging."

"Do not forget how she waited on you and acted as your housekeeper during your illness; nor how she watched over the children during our absence on our travels; nor how contentedly she sat with them in the school-room when you were left suddenly without a governess. Dora is a good girl, Mr. Leighton, notwithstanding her aunt's recollection of certain disobliging deeds, of which I have no knowledge."

"Well, we will leave her to her fate then,"

said Mr. Leighton, rising to depart; "and if any or all of you will follow us to the manor, you will find a welcome: if not, Mark, and Dora, and I must edify ourselves and our neighbors as best we can."

As soon as Mr. and Mrs. Gresford were alone, the subject was resumed.

"You were not kind toward Dora, I think, my dear," said Mr. Gresford; "you ought to have allowed Mr. Leighton to judge of the nature of your accusations against her."

"But you forget that he is so eccentric he might possibly rather commend her for that which we consider disobliging. He would not appreciate the annoyance of her refusal to take singing lessons of the first vocalists of the day, merely because she disapproved the words of the composition, and had some scruples about the character of the instructor."

"But you never required her to sing in company, therefore why should you feel annoyed?"

"Another voice was required, and hers was particularly suitable to assist her cousins in

their lesson. It really was extremely provoking of Dora."

"Well, my dear, I must say that I particularly wish you to accept Mr. Leighton's invitation: it is both consistent and natural that we should be with our ward on such an occasion."

"I entreat you not to propose it, Mr. Gresford. Surely you would not sacrifice the prospects and interests of your own children to needless etiquette. The season is at its height; our daughters have several important invitations, and it would be absolutely cruel to crush the hopes I entertain for their advancement and happiness, at the moment when the object of so many years of anxious preparation is at the point of realization. It is not for my own gratification, but for their real welfare, that I wish to remain in town at present."

"Well, of that I am quite assured; but you may be deceiving yourself. Supposing otherwise, however, how long do you imagine it may be before these hopes attain their climax?"

"I really cannot venture to say; but of course I should prefer to leave as soon as it becomes unfashionable to remain. The movements of others will decide the point."

"Humph!" said Mr. Gresford; "that looks very independent, certainly. But the fact is, that it will not be convenient to me to consult the fashions and movements of other people much longer. I have been disappointed. I have met with some unexpected losses, and my affairs are becoming more embarrassed every day. It is necessary you should know this, that you may act accordingly. And now, do you not perceive how far more agreeable it would be to leave town on such an occasion as that for which Mr. Leighton has invited you, than under the public ignominy of inability to maintain your position?"

Mrs. Gresford gazed upon her agitated husband in shocked surprise. But hoping that it was only some temporary pressure which threatened him, she besought him to recall Mr. Leighton, and to request his advice and assist-

ance. "For, with all his eccentricity, he is really kind," said she.

"No, no," said Mr. Gresford, angrily, "he will not sympathize with us in this. His views of life are utterly opposed to mine. He would have men usurp the position of angels, and live only for another world, while they have to battle through the duties and business of the present one. It has been enough for me to think of one thing at a time, and to aim at the independence of my family. For this I have strained every nerve, and only to be disappointed at last." And the bitterness of his tone struck terror into the heart of his wife.

Mr. Gresford forgot, or had never chosen to learn, that "godliness has the promise of the life that now is, and of that which is to come;" and that the service and honor of God are not only the duty of angels, or the enthusiastic dream of a fanatic, but the straightforward path to true prosperity, and the very stronghold of abiding peace. "O that my people had hearkened unto me, and Israel had walked in my

ways!" was the lament over rebels of old: "I should soon have subdued their enemies, and turned my hand against their adversaries. He should have fed them also with the finest of the wheat; and with honey out of the rock should I have satisfied thee." And again, "O that thou hadst hearkened to my commandments! Then had thy peace been as a river, and thy righteousness as the waves of the sea."

Mrs. Gresford hastened to ascertain if Mr. Leighton had left the house, and met him returning from his customary visit to the schoolroom, where his presence never failed to cheer the heart of the governess, as much as those of her pupils.

"Do oblige me by returning to Mr. Gresford for a few moments," cried she, "and devise with him some means to avert a threatening calamity:" and in much agitation she related the statement to which she had just listened. Mr. Leighton readily complied, but failed to penetrate the gloomy reserve with which

Mr. Gresford alluded to losses and disappointments, the nature of which he declined to explain.

"I should feel obliged if you will tell Dora that I wish to see her this evening," said he; "that is all you can do to assist me at present."

A painful thought crossed Mr. Leighton's mind, and he hesitated to seem suspicious; but deeming it right to speak, he said as he shook hands with Mr. Gresford, "If it be possible for a friend to assist you, let me beg to be that friend rather than Mark or Dora."

Stung to the quick, Mr. Gresford returned a hasty reply, but the expression of his wish to see Dora calmed the apprehensions of his anxious wife, who now secretly rejoiced in the fact that her niece was on the eve of independent ability to assist him, and was not a selfish or a fashionable woman.

When Dora arrived in the evening, she was conducted at once to Mrs. Gresford's dressing-room, where, regardless of the infected atmosphere which the sick nurse had left, her aunt

received her with a cordial embrace, and while arranging her toilet for an assembly to which she was engaged with her daughters, Mrs. Gresford informed her that annoyances in business having disturbed Mr. Gresford's mind, he was doubtless about to suggest some arrangement by which it was in the power of his ward to afford assistance, and in which, of course, she would gladly meet his wishes.

Dora having expressed her earnest desire to be of use in any difficulty, hastened to the dining-room, where Mr. Gresford sat alone, in a mood more gloomy and depressed than that with which he had left home in the morning.

Anxious to spare him any pain or humiliation in the anticipated explanation, Dora approached, and kindly retaining his hand, said, "I have seen my aunt, and am aware that some loss or perplexity has occurred to you, uncle; and if it be possible for me to assist you, now that I am so soon to relieve you of all responsibility concerning me, I shall rejoice in an opportunity to prove my gratitude for the protection and kind-

ness which I have experienced from you since the death of my father."

Mr. Gresford bit his lip, rose, and paced the room rapidly for a few moments, and then resumed his seat with an air of desperation.

"I have compelled myself to send for you, Dora, because you are a sensible girl, and can bear to hear the truth better than your aunt and cousins. I want to commend them also to your sympathy and care, for many trials await them."

"It is needless, uncle; duty dictates the utmost I can feel and do for them. But you will find that, after the first surprise, they will rise to whatever you may require from them. And now spare yourself this excitement and distress, by pointing out how far it is possible for my fortune to retrieve yours."

"My dear niece, you do not yet comprehend the extent of my weakness, of my ruin and misery. Your property, Dora, is also gone. In the hope of retrieving some, I have lost all—all! You are as destitute as my own children."

"And my brother?" said Dora, shocked and confused.

"And your brother," repeated Mr. Gresford. "It was madness and delusion, but it is done."

Dora sat silent and motionless. She had come to impart hope and consolation, believing it in her power to do so, and now she was herself helpless. Her heart was oppressed; she knew not what to say, and longed to be alone; but there was an expression of agony on her uncle's countenance, which obliged her to recall her thoughts from her "own things," and to bid them do needful duty on "the things of others."

"Why do you not reproach me, child?" exclaimed he, bitterly. "Speak, say anything you like; it will relieve me to hear you furious at your disappointment."

"O, uncle," said Dora, "I am only reproaching myself; I came here just now in proud satisfaction at the idea of helping and comforting you in sorrow, when I ought to have asked you to look at once, with every sin and sorrow,

to Him who pardons and comforts sinners, and to whom alone it belongs to bring good out of evil." Then after a pause she added, earnestly, "Dear sir, you have lived long enough for the world; let adversity draw you to the Saviour, who casts out none that come to him, whatever be the constraining cause. Fortune, station, things that belong to a world whose fashion is passing away, will be well lost if the result be the gain of an eternal blessing."

"You are an extraordinary girl, Dora," said her uncle in astonishment, "to think of such things at a moment like this."

"They are the things which have prepared me for such a moment," said Dora with animation, "and they will presently enable me to think and act for myself and others."

"But, child, we must now meet the difficulties of this world, and I wish you to prevail on your aunt, as the best and wisest course, to accompany you and Mr. Leighton to the country. I must leave you to inform him of all this, and to show him that he is my only hope for my

wife and children. Go now, and remember, it is useless to depend on any rescue from the wreck, for there can be none." And Mr. Gresford buried his face in his folded arms on the table before him.

Dora rose and reached the door, then turned irresolute, and looked upon her uncle. His attitude told of internal woe and despair, and she could not leave him thus. Again she approached, and kneeling down by his side, implored him to have patience with her.

"Uncle," said she, "your heart is very full; you do not know how to bear the load which oppresses you, and you cannot bear it alone. O, do not resist the pitying love that appeals to the weary and heavy laden, with promises of help and peace. O, cast yourself just as you are at the feet of Jesus; give yourself to him, and he will accept you, and give you wisdom to clear your way through all the troubles that beset you. The deepest, deadliest trouble is sin, and the happy consciousness of pardon through him, would enable you to bear nobly up

through any sorrow or humiliation among men."

"I do not wonder that you talk of sin and pardon, Dora, for I have injured you."

"O, but you know well that I do not allude to any such personal wrong. From the depth of my heart I freely forgive it were it ten times greater. But, uncle, you have lived without God in the world. You have not sought his guardianship against temptation, and you have not his almighty arm to lean upon in disappointment and trouble. But it is not too late. He will be all to you that you can ever need, if you will only cast yourself upon his mercy in Christ at once. May God help and bless you, uncle; I am indeed grieved for you."

When Dora withdrew, fearing to meet any of the family at that moment, she hastened to her own room to attain composure, and to realize the fact which had just been communicated to her. Her heart beat, and her brow throbbed with excitement, and the thought of her brother's loss added poignancy to the consciousness of her

own Their mutual schemes of happiness and usefulness, as stewards of God in the distribution of his bounties, the exquisite pleasure of ministering to the necessities of the poor and suffering, the satisfaction of aiding the spread of the glorious Gospel through instrumentalities in operation abroad and at home, all these and other kindred designs, that had long floated in imagination over the coming period of their majority, now faded into chaos, and Mark Leighton, her excellent and accomplished brother, who had been qualifying himself for the duties of a landlord and the service of his country in the higher departments of public employment, must now labor for his own existence, and toil through difficulties which he had hoped to smooth for others.

Dora was for a moment overwhelmed, and casting herself on her knees, burst into tears. Then nature born of Adam rose in mighty antagonism against the spirit born of God, and seemed for a season to have mastery. Nature suggested the consequences of the change from

affluence to sudden poverty, thoughts of the crush and blight of cherished hopes, and the want of principle which had dared to risk the orphan's portion in the gambling covetousness of speculation; and nature was angry. Then she remembered the selfish disregard of her feelings and inclinations in Mr. Gresford's directions, amounting almost to an order to forget herself in softening the fall, and soothing the mortified pride of others; and nature revolted at the needful self-denial.

But all this storm and tumult beat against a rock-built citadel that enshrined One more powerful still, and each assault served but to rouse the spirit born of God to assert his sovereignty over the tempted soul. Then the conqueror came forth in his might, a voice rose above the tempest, saying, "Peace, be still, and there was a great calm." Then nature received her answer and rebuke. Forgiveness of injury must be full and final: "If ye do not forgive, neither will your Father which is in heaven forgive your trespasses." Forgive, as ye hope to be

forgiven. It is a triumph that nothing but God's grace can achieve.

Then were suggested the comforting remembrances: "The Lord is my Shepherd; I shall not want." "They that seek the Lord shall not want any good thing." "My God shall supply all your need according to his riches in glory by Christ Jesus." "And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God." And for active, self-denying effort, "My grace is sufficient for thee." "Call upon me in the day of trouble: I will deliver thee, and *thou shalt glorify me.*" "I will instruct thee and teach thee in the way which thou shalt go: I will guide thee with mine eye."

Thus did the tempted Christian fight the good fight of faith, through Him who has promised to make manifest his strength in human weakness, and she found him faithful to his word; as surely a very present help on the pilgrim road, as he is strong to deliver from the grasp of Satan at first, and able to bear safely through the valley of death at last.

Surely it shall not be said, "Behold, thou hast instructed many, and thou hast strengthened the weak hands. Thy words have upholden him that was falling, and thou hast strengthened the feeble knees. But now it is come upon thee, and thou faintest; it toucheth thee, and thou art troubled!" No! principles must be tested; there are energies to be developed in adversity which continued prosperity would never have aroused; and there is a bow to be seen in the cloud for which uninterrupted sunshine would have afforded no opportunity.

And as Dora realized the overruling providence of the God of love in Christ, her prayer rose above passive submission into the animated desire of active coöperation: "And now, Lord, what wilt thou have me to do? The duties and pleasures I had fondly planned as the benefactress of others, by stewardship for thee, are swept away, therefore some other path must be determined. O, let me hear thy voice, saying, 'This is the way, walk ye in it.' The way that *I* had prepared is closed against me. 'Even

so, Father; for so it seemed good in thy sight.' But guide thy child into the diligent discharge of those 'good works which *thou* hast prepared for her 'to walk in,' and wherever I go, and whatever I am to do, O, let thy presence be with me! 'Leave me not, neither forsake me, O God of my salvation!'"

"I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee," saith the Spirit. "I will go before thee, and make the crooked places straight, and the rough places plain." "Fear thou not; for I am with thee: be not dismayed; for I am thy God: I will strengthen thee; yea, I will help thee; yea, I will uphold thee with the right hand of my righteousness." And though the means may differ, yet it is possible still to be the benefactress of others, and to hold stewardship for God.

And Dora rose from prayer in "the spirit of praise;" she "had been with Jesus," realizing her possession of unsearchable riches, and her eyes sparkled with holy animation, and her countenance was radiant with an adorning

touch that no earthly effort could have be stowed, a beauty that no light but that of heaven could have kindled.

While hesitating whether to venture to the school-room in search of Helen, a gentle knock at the door preceded the entrance of Mrs. Gresford, now attired for the gay assembly. "My dear Dora," said she, "your cousins request me to give their love, and to excuse them to you for this evening; but, as Miss Croyden can now spare you, perhaps you will rejoin us in a day or two."

"I am anxious to consult your wishes, aunt, and hope you will consent to permit us all to go to Leighton Manor together."

"Not at present, my dear; it is impossible. You are not aware of your cousins' prospects, or you would perceive the propriety of their remaining in town just now. Dora, I was a little doubtful once whether Mr. V. did not admire you—" Here Mrs. Gresford fixed a penetrating eye on the countenance of her niece, and was satisfied with the composure with which it was

endured. "But now I am assured it is otherwise."

"I hope my cousins will not deceive themselves with the flatteries that are surrounding them," said Dora, gently.

"I imagine their mother may be trusted, Miss Leighton," said Mrs. Gresford, haughtily. "Your opportunities for observation have not been very extensive, through your own fault, of course you are aware. But I must be gone. We shall see you, and Mark also, before you go to Leighton."

"Dear aunt, forgive me; but you are not aware how very much Uncle Gresford needs comfort now. I have left him quite alone."

"Of course you have promised him the assistance he requires; and I know not anything more likely to comfort him than that. But I will just look in upon him as I pass; so good-night, my dear."

And, opening the dining-room door, Mrs. Gresford put her gay head inside, saying, cheer-

fully, "You have arranged everything with Dora, I hope."

Mr. Gresford gave no reply, and she came forward, repeating the implied inquiry.

"Arranged?" said he, looking up with a dull, heavy countenance. "O yes, for the present; but I found this morning that it is absolutely necessary to leave town, and you must go with Dora at once."

"Well, well, we will talk of that by and by. Will you follow us presently to Lady V.'s?"

"Not to-night. Let me see the girls before they go;" and in a few moments his daughters, all smiles and elegance, stood before him.

"Look at these lovely flowers, papa!" said Clara. "Uncle Leighton brought them this morning; and when they and we are faded to-night, we are to read a text upon the subject. Is it not just like him?"

"Good-night, my dears. Go and enjoy yourselves while you can."

"O, do not be gloomy, papa," cried Augusta; "give us one smile, and then we must run away."

But there was no smile. Their father gazed upon them with a look from the remembrance of which they desired to escape, and Mrs. Gresford hesitated for a moment; but assuring herself that it was her duty to go, she followed her daughters to the carriage, and the apprehensions of the wife were speedily forgotten in the pleasures of the chaperone. If Mr. Leighton, or any one else, supposed that these young ladies and their mother were living without an object in life, he was profoundly mistaken, for they had a very decided object, and pursued it with zeal.

A few minutes afterward, Mr. Gresford's two youngest children came bounding in to say "good-night." Rose sprang into his arms, and Emma climbed upon his knee, while a contest ensued for the first kiss. What revolution of thought might have been caused by their presence was no further explained than by the tear which fell on Emma's brow, as he dismissed them with his blessing, and was again left in solitude.

CHAPTER X.

PAINFUL DISCOVERIES.

The way of peace they know not; and there is no judgment in their goings: they have made them crooked paths: whosoever goeth therein shall not know peace.—ISAIAH lix, 8.

Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace, whose mind is stayed on thee: because he trusteth in thee.—ISAIAH xxvi, 3.

"You are my child now, Dora," said Mr. Leighton, as he escorted her back to Miss Croyden's, after listening with indignation to the purport of her interview with her guardian. "Your father would have given you to me had I been with him at his death, and you and Mark shall reign jointly at Leighton Manor. With frugality, there will be sufficient for us all."

"Mark will not consent to that, my dear, kind uncle," said Dora; "and for myself, I scarcely know what I wish at present. It is so sudden,

so unexpected; and I think that perhaps I have proved myself unfaithful in a little, and therefore cannot be trusted with much."

"It is right to examine closely into your own heart and motives, my child, for that God is disappointing you for your real good I do not for a moment doubt. Learn carefully the lesson which may seem to you involved in it."

"It will pass too lightly over my head if I am to be your child, uncle; but it will not be right for me to indulge in your love and protection, while my cousins, no more guilty than I, are exposed to privation and distress."

"They must bend to circumstances, Dora. The most charitable view of the case leaves Mr. and Mrs. Gresford highly blamable. They have been 'sowing to the wind,' and are about to 'reap the whirlwind.' I will render all necessary assistance in my power, but I will not minister to pride and vanity, nor to idleness and discontent. Your cousins must now exert their talents in a different sphere."

On reaching the house, Mr. Leighton re-

ceived a message of entreaty from Mabel, that he would permit her to introduce her father, who had recently arrived; and, to her great surprise, they met in mutual and pleased recognition.

"It is as I suspected," said Mr. Leighton; "and it was Miss Croyden's likeness to you which first attracted me toward her."

"And how often I have wished for an opportunity of thanking my unknown monitor," said Mr. Croyden. "The pleasure of doing so is immeasurably enhanced, to find in him the relative of my daughter's friend."

To Dora Mr. Croyden expressed the warm language of a grateful heart for her faithful friendship to his child; and Dora was glad to escape for a while with Mabel, not to detail the history of her own trial and disappointment, but to listen to the plans which Mabel was forming to avoid intercourse with her former friends, and to effect her flight unseen by all who would comment on the personal change which she still unceasingly deplored.

"And now," said Mr. Leighton, when alone with Mr. Croyden, "may I ask if your desire to thank your monitor arises from experience of the peace which he ventured to commend to your acceptance?"

"Not precisely," said Mr. Croyden, smiling; "but your earnest assurance that it was to be found ready made in another, provoked me from my selfish apathy to resolve that I would attain a measure of it for myself. I have since endeavored to live for others, and I find active usefulness in my station of life a soother of sorrow, though it cannot remove it. The temple may stand, but the violent wrench of the presiding idol from its shrine, must leave a gap, and a sign of ruin, which time can never efface."

"But the temple may be dedicated to a more lawful use, after the iconoclast has done his painful work; and the adornments of the true worship, though less visibly attractive, may be more productive of peaceful and sanctifying contemplation."

"Your views are unchanged, I perceive,"

said Mr. Croyden; "and I trust your sorrows have been soothed away by time."

"Time has but little to do for those whom God condescends to comfort," returned Mr. Leighton. "He has never failed me in any one of the gracious things which he promised to do."

"I have succeeded in enduring life for the benefit of others," said Mr. Croyden, "and that is an attainment to one who was ready, I am shocked to say, to quit the scene of trial, without waiting for a summons. I am endeavoring to atone for such infatuation, and to secure a happy reunion with the treasure so suddenly snatched from me."

"Pardon me," said Mr. Leighton, "but is that your idea of salvation and glory? If so, I do not wonder that you are still merely enduring a trying existence instead of living a happy life, or that true peace has never soothed past sorrow, or cheered your dayly experience. My dear sir, you are only building on sand, and a storm must come to sweep away your refuge, and

leave you more desolate than before. It is not thus that God's Spirit comforts mourners."

"I do not understand you," said Mr. Croyden. "Surely you do not mean that self-renunciation for the good of our fellow-creatures is not acceptable to God?"

"I mean, my dear sir, that such motives as you describe are but another phase of the idolatry in which the human heart is fertile. Atonement for past sin is not attainable by any subsequent obedience. A perfect atonement has been made by Jesus Christ, and the sinner has only to avail himself of it. The favor of God is lodged in the person of his beloved Son, and the sinner has only to accept it. Here alone is found the constraining love that originates grateful service, and on this altar alone does God accept the person and the work of all who work for him. Christianity, like charity, must begin at home, and until the sinner's person is accepted and justified in Christ, his work is worthless before God: he is only deluding and destroying himself."

"Your creed is indeed prostrating; but I find the testimony of my conscience to the fact that I am doing my duty a lawful ground of satisfaction and of hope."

"Alas, my dear sir, such testimony will not follow you into the dazzling light wherein your performances must be viewed, nor weigh a feather in the scales of the sanctuary, when all delusions must vanish away, and men and things must take the places, and stand the estimate of Divine award."

"Where will you presume to find authority for such a premature judgment?"

"In God's revealed word. He has said that 'without faith it is impossible to please' him. The question was once asked of Him who knew how to give an infallible reply, 'What shall we do, that we might work the works of God?' Jesus answered and said, 'This is the work of God, that ye believe on him whom he hath sent. Faith in Jesus is the Spirit's new-creating touch, which originates the only principle, whence acceptable service springs. Love is the luxuri-

ant soil of good works, the native element of Christian duty."

"You insist too much on a sort of enthusiasm, of which really we see so little effect in the world, that you must excuse me if I doubt the validity of your argument."

"To our disgrace be that spoken," said Mr. Leighton. "It is too true, but yet not less true is the statement I have made. 'We love God because he first loved us,' and we serve him because we love, or we never love truly nor serve acceptably at all."

"But suppose his providences are such as to crush our hearts under a sense of hardship and severity; there is surely nothing winning in such a process."

"We are never told to read God's character and attributes in his providences, but we are told to read them in his Son, where justice and mercy, righteousness and love, are perfectly, unchangeably manifested. His reasons for all he does cannot possibly appear in the little speck that you and I occupy in his vast and

comprehensive plan; and in this I find a channel to glorify him in 'the trial' of my faith, which he says is 'precious.' Stone must be hewn from the quarry, iron heated in the fire, silver purified in the furnace, before the materials for the temple are prepared; while a master's hand and eye must regulate the whole to secure harmony and beauty in the structure. We are too apt to think that our business in life is to seek our own personal enjoyment, instead of recollecting that we are part of a perfect plan as yet known only to its great Designer, and that we are being fitted for that precise spot in its future manifestation for which we are most adapted, and in which we shall best declare his glory."

"Have you succeeded in persuading my daughter to this view of her late affliction?" asked Mr. Croyden. "She is keenly alive to the change it has wrought in her appearance, and even foolishly imagined it could affect a parent's love."

"I hope and pray for her," replied Mr. Leighton; "but, like you, she does not see how it is

possible for a loving hand to strike. As yet gloom and discontent add their disfiguring aid to the traces of disease, and she now shuns the world for which she lately lived; but I trust she will yet be enabled to feel that it has been good for her to be afflicted, and to value that friendship and seek those adornments over which time and sickness have no power."

"You speak very cheeringly. Would that such a buoyant temperament had been vouchsafed to me."

"It is not temperament, except as God the Spirit has wrought it," said Mr. Leighton, warmly; "and he must not be defrauded of the honor due to his glorious work. I feel and speak not as a man born into the world, and left to his own devices and deceits, but as one born again of the Spirit of God, on whom the impress of new-creating grace has not been laid in vain. I was once worldly, selfish, proud, self-willed, self-righteous; but, saved and sanctified in Jesus Christ, 'by the grace of God I am what I am.'"

The manly tone and dignified simplicity of the declaration carried respect, if not conviction; and Mr. Croyden felt it impossible to do otherwise than admire, what he nevertheless fel no inclination to adopt on the only terms of its attainment.

Mabel made many efforts to prevail on Dora to accompany her on her contemplated excursion.

"I do wish so much to keep you with me, Dora," said she. "While in your society I see something lovely in religion, but when left to myself I feel hardened and repelled. I cannot, and will not, return to the world. I detest its hollowness and insincerity, but I have nothing in exchange with which to fill the void."

"The world would court and flatter you as much as before, if you desired it, Mabel, and quite as sincerely."

"But I have learned to estimate its opinion, and also differently to estimate myself. I am amazed at the persevering kindness with which

you have borne with me, Dora, and am at a loss for the reason of it."

"I saw you come, gifted with many talents, to immolate yourself to the god of this world," said Dora, earnestly, "and I longed to warn, and to attract you to a better service. Uncle Leighton observed your likeness to a stranger in whom he had felt much interest, and we desired to hover near you in hope to serve you. We love your soul, Mabel; it is immortal; and you are a wanderer with a treasure of priceless value until you come home to God. When you were ill, I heard that you were unhappy and destitute of sympathy, and I came to tell you of the Friend who 'loveth at all times,' of a spiritual beauty more lovely than anything that disease could blight, of a happiness within your reach, and a purpose worth living for; and now my mission is accomplished, happy indeed should I be, if by God's blessing on the truths we have read and pondered together, I could hope to leave you safe and happy in the faith and love of that eternal Friend

who is 'the same yesterday, to-day, and forever.'"

"Dora, my dear friend, my more than sister," said Mabel, much affected, "your efforts shall not have been in vain. If after a time I can subdue my rebellious will, and feel that I am sufficiently penitent, and anxious to be holy and useful as you are, I solemnly promise to try to love God, and to serve him only."

"Then the time will never come," said Dora, anxiously; "you cannot gather grapes from thorns. True humility, penitence, and love are fruits of God's own planting, and cannot grow outside his garden. Begin with giving yourself to Christ, and he will do all the rest. Just simply contemplate Jesus, what he did, and why he did it; and never did sinner come ignorant and helpless to learn of him the way to love and serve, without finding the very heavens opened, and a blessing poured out which rectifies all mistake about salvation, and changes the toiling slave into a beloved and welcomed child."

"Of this be assured," said Mabel, gazing upon her friend with admiration, "that the remembrance of your example will forever prevent me from being half a Christian: I will be all or nothing."

And thus they parted, both under the discipline of a Father. Mabel had lost her beauty, and with it the charm of her young life. Dora had lost her fortune, and with it went the cherished schemes which had constituted the chief pleasure of its possession. Mabel murmured and rebelled; Dora submitted and acquiesced. Mabel's happiness was uprooted, and her gourd withered; she had no object in life, no rest, no hope. The seat of Dora's happiness was where no shock could reach it, no contingences affect it. Her plans were indeed overturned, and her wishes frustrated; but her object in life remained the same, the glory of Him who was the foundation of her present rest, and the security of patient hope. And as each struggle with the old nature increased the triumphs of the spirit and the subjugation of the flesh, she was able to

rejoice in the will of God, and would not, if she could, have ordered her circumstances other than they were.

O, happy religion, that can so influence the heart, and so rule the life; so brood dove-like over the struggles of human will, and so sweetly smooth the path of duty!

On the evening of Mr. Grestord's disclosure to Dora of the state of his affairs, Mark Leighton landed on his native shore, after an absence of two years abroad. His father had arranged by will that neither of his children should attain possession of their respective portions until the elder should reach the age of twenty-four, when he believed their characters might be sufficiently matured to secure its prudent enjoyment and disposal. The day was at hand, and Mark was hastening to meet his friends in London, his head full of benevolent plans, and his heart full of hope and pleasure.

In the hotel where he rested, a newspaper was placed before him, and in glancing carelessly

down its columns, a paragraph caught his attention. It was announced among the "*on dits*" of the day, (but the initials were only too plain,) that some dishonorable transactions were on the eve of exposure, in which Mr. Gresford had not only lost his own property, but also that which he held in trust for his two orphan wards, one of whom was expected home, to find himself ruined and destitute.

Mark read and re-read, and hoped it was false, but some little circumstances connected with his recent supplies excited fears of its possibility. "At least, it is well that I should be prepared," thought he; "but 'ruined and destitute,' that cannot be, while I have a Saviour to love me, and a God to provide."

A few hours more placed the matter beyond a doubt, and afforded to his affectionate sister the joyful assurance that her beloved brother was sustained and influenced by the same Spirit who cheered and directed herself. She knew not, however, how much his plans for earthly happiness were involved in the disap-

pointment, nor how the welfare of others was linked with his own. But Mark was resolute to prove that no Christian man can be ruined and destitute, and refused a thought to gloom and despondency. He heard with deep regret of the hopeless condition of his friend Walter Severn, and was pained to find that Helen was still governess at Mrs. Gresford's. But for himself, "God has spared me all my energies of mind and body, Dora," said he; "and now, with his blessing, let us face the future fearlessly."

"But now, my children," said Mr. Leighton, "before you begin to make your future arrangements, let me tell you that, instead of the estate which Mark was about to purchase, Leighton Manor will one day be his, and Dora is my child to share all I possess now, and to take an independent portion hereafter. This is decided."

"And it is the first and dearest relief to my heart to know that my sister is provided for," said Mark; "but for myself, the talents I have been endeavoring to cultivate must now be

turned to some profitable business, and with your help, dear uncle, I shall presently decide upon it. We must first obtain an insight into the state of Mr. Gresford's accounts."

"He said everything was gone," said Dora, "and that it was vain to seek any rescue from the wreck. But it will be right for Mark to call upon him as soon as possible."

From Mr. Leighton's, Dora and her uncle proceeded to Mr. Gresford's, whither Mark was to follow; but the scene on their arrival was at once unexpected and confounding.

Mrs. Gresford was in extreme distress, and her daughters were alternately in hysterics. Helen Severn was ministering to them all; and being the only collected person of the party, she informed them that Mr. Gresford had not been at home since the preceding evening, and that no one could give any account of him.

"Dora," said Mrs. Gresford on perceiving her, "can this be your work? Is it possible that you refused to assist him, and have driven him from us in despair?"

"Dear aunt, he has himself deprived me of all power to assist. I hoped you were aware of this."

"I see it all," exclaimed Mrs. Gresford, indignantly. "You are a heartless, selfish girl, and your boasted religion is hypocrisy and self-righteousness."

"Because her guardian has committed a breach of trust, and has sacrificed the property of his wards with his own?" said Mr. Leighton, in a tone of gentle inquiry.

Mrs. Gresford looked aghast. "And what do they intend to do?" she asked in alarm, as if she saw in the sympathizing countenance of her niece officers of justice, a prison, and public disgrace.

"To try to help you to bear a change of circumstances, and to smooth them as far as God permits," said Dora, tenderly. "Had other means been spared to me, we would have shared them, but now we must share adversity together."

"You will now agree at once to accompany

Dora to the Manor," said Mr. Leighton. "Probably Mr. Gresford may appear again presently, and Mark and I will endeavor to assist him in a straightforward examination of his affairs. In the meantime, Leighton will be a quiet retreat for you all."

"I prefer to go down to Green Lawn; why should not my own house be my retreat?" asked Mrs. Gresford, unable to comprehend the exact position of affairs.

"I do not advise it," said Mr. Leighton, evasively. "But will you not order preparations for departure to be made?"

"O, no, no! not in such haste," said Mrs. Gresford, looking at her weeping daughters. "It will be better to wait here and keep up appearances until I hear all your miserable suggestions confirmed by my husband himself. I have been dreadfully shocked, but now I feel able to judge and decide for myself. If it be really necessary, Dora can take Miss Severn and the children. And now, Clara, my love, dry your tears; your interests shall not be

sacrificed while it is possible to uphold them, and at present our affairs cannot have been made public. So go and prepare to fulfill our appointment at the flower show this morning."

"This is really infatuation," said Mr. Leighton with displeasure; "your affairs are already well known. The newspaper was Mark's first informant."

"The newspaper?" screamed Mrs. Gresford in horror; "then we are indeed undone."

"Mamma," said Clara, "I am sure Lady V. could not know, or she would not have appointed to call for us this morning."

"My dear Clara," said Mr. Leighton, "I trust you are not deceiving yourself with regard to Mr. V. It is perhaps only right that I should tell you I am sufficiently well acquainted with him to know where his feelings and preferences are involved."

Mrs. Gresford and Clara looked at each other in mortified amazement. Every word uttered by Mr. Leighton acted as an explosive machine beneath the airy fabric they had built.

"This is too much! this is insulting!" cried Clara, rushing from the room; and, consumed with rage, she threw herself on a couch and wept bitterly. Nature was ruler here; there was no calming influence to still the turbulence of passion, no well-known hand to which to cling for hope and succor. The poor victim of her own willful folly lay helpless and wretched, riches, rank, fashion, indulgences receding from her grasp, and no substitute to fill the gap; and she wept away all strength of mind or body to rally from her own disappointments for her mother's comfort. She distributed her reproaches everywhere but in the right place, and blamed her father for imprudence, her mother for exciting and encouraging her ambition, and all whose notice she had coveted because they were insensible to her merits. The thought of the past was hateful, the present hopeless, the future chaos. What possible object in life that was not groveling and odious could adversity present? She knew not how to grapple with a single difficulty, and yet to com-

mon sense, and a feeling heart, never was daughter's duty plainer. But Clara recognized no duty but self-gratification, was sensitive to no motive but self-love; she imagined herself the most injured of heroines that was ever crushed before the decrees of perverse, undiscriminating fate.

And the disappointed mother too, she mourned in sentimental sorrow over her own and her children's blighted hopes. "Alas!" thought she, "to be driven into retirement and insignificance at the moment when the object for which I have toiled for so many years was within our grasp! My children are not fit for vulgar poverty. I have trained them for the luxuries and refinements of life, where alone their talents can find scope. Miserable mother! where can I look for comfort?"

"Ah," said the fashionable world, "it is not in me; I am gay, and forget the unhappy." "It is not in me," said the country; "I am dull." "Nor in me," said conscience; "I shall prick." "Nor in me," said duty; "I am hard after long

neglect." And thus, at drawn daggers on every side, the conviction pressed heavily on the weary heart, that life past had been lived in vain, and life to come was a dreary blank.

The day wore away without any event excepting the extraordinary one of a visit from Lady V. to Dora, who preserved silence upon its import.

Mr. Gresford did not appear, and his insolvency was made public in terms of strong indignation, while news arrived of peremptory visitors at Green Lawn, who claimed right to possess the premises in the name of the lawful owners, a list of creditors long enough to afford a subject of discussion to the whole country, and to establish the unenviable reputation of a practiced swindler. So said the sufferers, who usually view the enormity of such offenses in proportion to their several losses.

CHAPTER XI.

DEVOTION TO DUTY.

If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, take up his cross dayly, and follow me.—LUKE ix, 23.

No further opposition being made to the late unwelcome interference of the only real friends of the fallen family, the party proceeded to Leighton Manor.

A settled gloom weighed down the spirits of Mrs. Gresford and her elder daughters, who assumed the air of martyrs, and accepted the affectionate attentions of Dora and Helen as their due, rather than as a spontaneous expression of sympathy and kindness. Dora, the really injured one, whose interests had been remorselessly sacrificed to preserve, for a time, the false position of her guardian, was the only cheerful and contented one of the sufferers; and

in her generous devotion to the comfort of others, found ample occupation for her thoughts and energies.

"But Dora," they said among themselves "might afford to be cheerful. Poverty could not affect her, as she would doubtless be Mr. Leighton's heiress. And as for Mark, he could work for himself, which was far more creditable than living in idleness as an independent gentleman." And thus the matter, so far as it affected the defrauded orphans, was dismissed.

Happily, Mark was satisfied to "work;" and having for several years directed his attention to the law, he decided, with his uncle's approbation and assistance, to qualify himself for that profession. His first essay as a candidate for his actual livelihood brought a flood of painful and contending feelings struggling around the noble principles on which he was resolved, with God's help, to act. It could not be that a young man, born and educated to an independent position among the noble and wealthy of his country, should sit down to the desk for life,

without some reflections on the injustice which had brought him there, and some regrets for the station he had lost; but Mark battled bravely against such suggestions, and realizing, like his sister, the grace which had bought him at the costly price of a Divine ransom, he set himself to fulfill his new duties with the earnest desire to glorify God in his body and spirit, which were God's.

Dora, too, was considering and maturing some important project. She knew that Mr. Leighton had been accustomed to subtract but a small part of his income for his own personal wants, and that the bulk, after improvements on his estate in the country, was divided among the many charitable objects which deserved his interest and assistance. And she knew that he could not maintain his present expensive household without greatly interfering with these rules. That he would expect some effort on the part of Mrs. Gresford and her daughters was but rational, and to assist in that effort was her anxious desire.

One day, after hope of hearing from her husband until he could reach some spot of safety had nearly vanished from Mrs. Gresford's mind, note was conveyed to her, requesting that she would meet him on the border of a little wood, which skirted the gardens, and whither she must come under cover of the night, and alone, if possible; but that, if a companion were necessary, through fear or anxiety, Dora must be the trustworthy confidante of the interview. And at nightfall the trembling wife, leaning on the arm of her niece, stole forth to the appointed spot, where her husband wandered, with pride still unsubdued, around the home where charity sheltered his forsaken family.

Dora retired to sit down on the trunk of a fallen tree while her uncle and aunt conversed; but soon detecting the sound of intense sorrow, she stepped forward to hear Mr. Gresford impatiently check the remonstrances of his wife with the information that he was going abroad, and that, as soon as he could provide a home in another hemisphere, she should join him with

the family there. The alternative, he said, was a prison and disgrace.

"Uncle," said Dora, "if you leave the country now, you never can return in safety and honor. And it is additional wrong to leave us to struggle alone through the difficulties in which you have involved us. For my aunt's sake, for my cousins' sake, nay, for the sake of that very world's opinion which you prize, and which will stamp such a flight with the just charge of cowardice and fraud, stay with us; meet your difficulties with candor and resolution, and be assured that my uncle and brother will far rather forward than impede any arrangement you may propose."

Mr. Gresford stood silent and gloomy. The moon just then shone through the passing clouds, and revealed the haggard wretchedness of his altered countenance.

"Let us lead him home," said Dora. "Let us all work cheerfully to repair the mischief that cannot now be averted, and with God's help and blessing we shall yet prosper and be happy."

"Hush, Dora! you are incompetent to judge; your uncle must know best," said Mrs. Gresford, trembling and irresolute, for the dread of disgrace operated even more powerfully on her mind than on that of her husband.

"You will do better without me," said he. "The world will still respect you, but if I stay we all sink together. And it may be that, by a renewal of the efforts by which I rose from indigence before, I may yet, in another country, look up with the proudest and best again."

"Never," said Dora, energetically; "the accusation of your conscience for the infliction of present wrong will paralyze exertion, for you know what is right, but you refuse to do it. O, forgive me, uncle, but I feel as if the choice between good and evil were for the last time before you, God and duty on one side, pride and ruin on the other." And notwithstanding the impatience of her uncle, and the fears of her aunt, Dora portrayed the case and its best remedy with earnest and truthful plainness, which

never at a moment less urgent would have ventured from her gentle lip.

But she urged in vain. "I will think, I will write and tell you my resolve," said Mr. Gresford, in strong agitation. "Dora, be kind and careful of them all, and may God help and bless you;" and, with a hasty farewell, he disappeared in the darkness of the wood.

Mrs. Gresford with difficulty reached the house, and then abandoned herself to overwhelming grief; while Dora, troubled and sorrowful for the misery she could not relieve, ministered with tender assiduity to her unhappy aunt.

And wherefore all this domestic anguish? Alas! only because of that which is passing every day around us, a struggle after riches and possessions, and a name on the earth; a life devoted to what may be engulfed in an ocean storm, or thrown away on a glutted market, stolen by the thief, or overreached on a reckless venture; while the enduring realities of eternal life, and the faithful love from which neither

life, nor death, nor angels, principalities, and powers, nor things present, nor things to come, can ever separate the happy possessor, are disregarded or undervalued, until the grave has placed them beyond attainment forever and ever.

Mrs. Gresford continued in a state of depression pitiable to behold, and her daughters were incapable of offering the solace of hope and affection. Their young hearts, so lately buoyant with indulgence and pleasure, were crushed by the grasp of poverty, and their pity and regret were exhausted on themselves. Youth is not naturally thus easily cast down, but, like the lightly-trodden daisy, revives again elastic and erect when the pressure has passed over it; but now that the world was no longer their field of exhibition, the trained daughters of fashion, like exotics broken on the stem, pined and drooped, and suffered energy to die within them: they wondered how anything else could be expected.

But not so the believer in the love of Christ and the providence of God. That flower may

bend and bow beneath the tread of adversity, but it cannot break, it will not wither; life from a living root supplies it with renewing vigor, and though "sorrow may endure for a night," yet "joy cometh in the morning," and with the demands of active duty comes the upspringing power to perform it; and while the dew yet hangs upon the leaf, the morning sun flashes upon it with a beautiful light which had not sparkled there had there been no fall of tears, no night of sorrow.

Dora felt all the pain of a generous heart in witnessing ruin she could not avert; and when sometimes tempted to repine because of her impotence through the loss of her own temporal possessions, she endeavored to dwell rather on the better spiritual blessings with which poverty could not interfere.

Was money the only means of doing good? Were not time, and sympathy, and prayer invaluable talents also? And the child's submission to the Father's will, the patient waiting at his feet for guidance and direction, the perse-

vering sympathy in others' sorrows that tries to soothe, though unheeded, and quietly ministers unthanked, the self-denying effort to help unnoticed or ungraciously rejected—were these all worthless? They may seem but little things in earthly estimate, and do not intrude in the face of observation; they are among the fragrant offspring of the valley of humility, content to perfume the air with their sweetness, without claiming the reward of gratitude or notice, and the withdrawal of their influence would be keenly felt, even where its presence is unacknowledged. But before Him by whom actions and motives are seen to their source, they are eloquent of Christian character, and deemed worthy of note in the book of remembrance.

At last Mr. Leighton arrived. Investigation of Mr. Gresford's affairs had proved the truth of the statement, that there could be nothing left for his family. And now came a trial of Christian judgment. Mr. Leighton was not disposed to allow "idle sloth to lean upon his charitable arm," and having given hospitable time to

mourn, he felt that there must also be a time to act. To Clara he first ventured, in terms of kindness and feeling, to signify his desire to forward any plans of future effort which might be found practicable; but Clara's only reply was a look of surprise and indignation, and a burst of tears.

Mr. Leighton expressed to Dora his regret that such an allusion had caused pain; "but," said he, "it may excite them to some decision for the welfare of the whole."

"Alas!" said Dora, "I fear they have no idea of exertion, and no purpose in contemplation. But I have been solemnly, and as in the presence of God, considering our position, and with your consent and assistance, dear uncle, I must act for them."

"I do not see the necessity, Dora," said Mr. Leighton. "They have all lived for themselves hitherto, and it is but a change of means. Surely they will propose something. Yet they are like wrecked mariners, cast ashore without a single hope, or aim, or resource."

"Then there is the greater need that some friendly hand should point out a path on the desolate shore; some one possessed of a hope, influenced by a God-given aim, and not altogether destitute of resources. There is no one bound to them by relationship, or gratitude for past kindnesses, as I am, dear uncle."

"And what do you propose, Dora?"

"I see with pain the utter helplessness of my poor aunt, and am satisfied that she will not begin anything unprompted. My two younger cousins yet require several years of wholesome discipline and instruction, and you know, uncle, education will now be apparently their only portion. Then dear Helen Severn would be distressed to go again among strangers. Something, then, that will afford to my aunt and cousins a comfortable maintenance, without any unfeminine hardship or exertion, provide the means of education to the children, and retain their excellent governess, would not this be desirable?"

"It sounds plausible; but pray proceed."

"If we were to open a school, uncle, we could secure all this."

"We!"

"Yes; aunt should be the visible head, Clara and Augusta, Helen and I the active teachers—the working bees, you know. Clara plays and sings very scientifically, Augusta paints and does fancy work like a fairy, and Helen and I can undertake the general routine of common things."

"The drudgery! yes, doubtless, it is an admirable idea! And do you suppose that any mother in her senses will intrust a child to such guardianship? I speak advisedly. Is a selfish, ambitious woman of fashion like your aunt, who has trained her own children for the world, a suitable protectress of youth? On your conscience, Dora, dare you advise any one to confer on her such a responsibility?"

"You almost frightened me, uncle," said Dora, smiling; "but my scheme, if adopted, runs thus: My aunt should take care of the health of our pupils, my cousins should superin-

tend their fingers, and Helen and I—ah, never say that I am not ambitious—would assail their heads and hearts, try to form their characters, and lead them to the feet of the best Guide of their youth. No child should ever pass away from our influence ignorant of the way of salvation, and the true object and use of life, and all its blessings."

Mr. Leighton sat for a few moments absorbed in his own meditations. At last he looked again earnestly into the eloquent countenance of his niece.

"My dear child," said he, with tender seriousness, "is it for this you have rejected rank, wealth, honor, I had almost said happiness, as much as this world has power to bestow?"

"No, uncle," replied Dora, with equal seriousness; "that was for my Saviour's sake, who has bestowed upon me a present peace, and the promise of future glory, higher, better, sweeter than anything the world contains."

"But it has not commended your religion,

Dora, to make it a barrier to the happiness of another."

"I have no right to be influenced by the effect upon others, when God's word has defined the path of duty, uncle."

"And has the duty cost you nothing, my precious child?"

"Nothing that is not richly overpaid by the love of Him who knows the weakness of the human heart, and in whom all who are 'more than conquerors' find victory ever succeeded by peace."

"I have been forcibly reminded," said Mr. Leighton, "of one concerning whom it is written, that 'Jesus beholding him loved him,' and yet in faithfulness was constrained to add, 'One thing thou lackest.' And that 'one thing' was everything to an immortal soul. And I remember that it is written again, 'He that hath my commandments, and keepeth them, he it is that loveth me: and he that loveth me shall be loved of my Father, and I will love him, and will manifest myself to him.'"

"And now, uncle, may I change the subject, and ask your opinion on my scheme?"

"A very likely one to obtain my approbation, Dora. And pray what is to become of poo Uncle Leighton, who has been enjoying the idea of a daughter in his solitary home, and a lady patroness for a host of fine fancies to be set afloat among his people?"

"Dear uncle, I own that it would delight my heart to be your child and companion, if it were right so to indulge it. But think over it all again, and teach me what will most honor God, and prove most useful to others: that is all I seek in this new project."

"It is not difficult to see that, Dora; so I may as well jump overboard at once, and take my claims out of your way. But I must be allowed to come to school too, whenever I please, and you must keep holidays at Leighton Manor. But suppose Mark should disapprov your plan?"

"I know how to silence him," said Dora, playfully; "I have a hostage for his submission."

"Then you shall do it; and the blessing of God be upon you, my dear niece. It seems the best thing, under the circumstances, that can be suggested for this unhappy family."

"I have yet the chief difficulty to surmount in obtaining my aunt's consent," said Dora; "but I hope to show her how lightly the burden will fall when distributed among us."

The first intimation of the "degrading idea" was, as Dora anticipated, received with profound disgust.

"A school!" exclaimed Mrs. Gresford; "it is out of the question. To be tormented with the charge of other people's children! I could not have imagined anything so unreasonable. Dora must certainly be deranged. What would the world say?"

"Dora does not care for the world," said Clara, with contempt. "If you wish to deter her from a purpose, you need only suggest that the world would approve it."

"My poor Clara too! must you spend your talents in the society of children? Must Augus

ta's accomplishments and yours be taxed for paltry earnings?"

"There is no 'must' in the case, mamma, if you disapprove it; for there is a great parade about consulting your feelings."

"But, my dear Clara, what can we do? It may be some time before your father is able to send for us, and this dull place was the only refuge open to us in our unparalleled misfortunes, where it seems we shall not much longer be welcome. Can you think of anything preferable to the school?"

"Indeed, I cannot think of anything at all, mamma, and I do not care much what becomes of me. But the idea of being a schoolmistress is odious. Pray put an end to it at once."

But, in default of a better "idea," Mrs. Gresford felt that it would be hazardous to reject the one that Dora's self-denying kindness commended; and after considering that it was the most respectable resource to which ladies could direct their attention, and that, moreover,

Dora and Helen would do the work, and educate her younger children, she yielded a reluctant assent, and proceedings commenced forthwith. But in vain Dora sought sympathy and coöperation from either her aunt or cousins; she had committed an unpardonable offense by her interference on their behalf, and they mourned in private over the terrific penance she was so industriously preparing for them.

Dora proposed that the card of terms should be written rather than printed, and requested her cousins to assist her in proving to all whom it might concern, that a fair and legible handwriting would be one of the advantages of the school. Clara declined, and Augusta scrawled so carelessly that Dora was compelled to write the whole herself.

"To whom do you propose sending your cards?" asked Mrs. Gresford.

"To every family and acquaintance who may be likely to forward our wishes," replied Dora; "and I was about to ask you, aunt, to begin a list for me."

"I cannot help you, child. Of course you will not send to any of my friends."

A storm then ensued, and Dora retired before its fury to seek help and encouragement where it was never sought in vain, and then quietly finished her task without further contest.

It would have been instructive to follow some of those notes to their respective destinations.

"Dear me!" exclaimed one of a morning coterie, "here is a change indeed. The Misses Gresford and Miss Leighton are commencing a school. It looks well for them to be doing something, and I hope they will be encouraged. Not that I should quite like to send my daughters, because I prefer to employ those who teach because they like it, rather than those who do so because they are obliged. Otherwise, as Mrs. Gresford is certainly a lady, she might train girls for making a figure in the world."

"That is true," remarked another; "but I should depend on Miss Leighton as the respons-

ible person for the real advancement of their studies, for though I detest cant and hypocrisy, yet when these overreligious people are sincere you may rely upon their principles: and I never heard Miss Leighton proved guilty of hypocrisy."

"It happens fortunately for her that she did not mix much in society, for she will feel reverses less than her gay cousins. But should you not fear that she might make some wrong impression on the minds of children?"

"Ah, yes, you allude to her fanaticism. Doubtless it will operate to her disadvantage, but possibly she may now see the propriety of either repressing or altering her peculiar views. Is it not extraordinary that Mr. Leighton does not provide for her?"

"Very; but it is impossible to account for the vagaries of those odd people who pretend to spend half their lives in another world by anticipation. For my part, I am content to perform the duties of one world at a time, and I cannot see what right people have to fancy themselves

so much better than the mass of their fellow-creatures."

One lady then ventured to assert that some of her acquaintance holding the same views rushed into the opposite extreme, and pronounced themselves and everybody else bad beyond the possibility of recovery by any efforts of their own: another proof that religious people were divided into two classes, hypocrites and fanatics, of whom the latter were to be pitied and sometimes even trusted, while the former should be denounced with deserved scorn. And so the fair jury having given their verdict, dismissed the case, and forgot to recommend the "prisoner of hope" to the mercy of their friends.

But not so all who read Dora's card. There were some who appreciated her motives, and resolved to manifest practical sympathy in her self-devotion to the interests of those by whom she had been wronged.

CHAPTER XII.

REST AND UNREST.

The blessing of the Lord, it maketh rich, and he addeth no sorrow with it.—PROVERBS x, 22.

But the wicked are like the troubled sea, when it cannot rest.—ISAIAH lvii, 20.

A PLEASANT house was taken in a healthful and otherwise suitable neighborhood, at least one hundred miles from Green Lawn; and Dora presided over the reception and arrangement of furniture, preparatory to the arrival of the family. When all was completed, Mr. Leighton escorted them to their new abode, and Dora was gratified to observe the satisfaction with which Mrs. Gresford looked round the rooms specially devoted to her own personal use, where the chief adornments consisted of favorite pieces of furniture from her former

home, which had been purchased by Mr. Leighton at the sale, and were now disposed with the hope of rendering the change in her circumstances as little intrusively apparent as possible. Clara and Augusta recognized with pleasure their harp, piano, book-case, drawing stand, and other valuables, over the supposed loss of which they had mourned; while among many unavoidable tokens of comparative poverty, the hand of taste had contrived to mingle much that was graceful.

To do all this involved personal privation to Mr. Leighton and his niece, but once begun it was worth doing completely; and Dora's hopes rose high of success, and of the ultimate coöperation of those most nearly interested in it.

But as if, when most sanguine, the enemy stood ready to attack her consistency and perseverance, it happened, after some unkind and ungrateful comments, that Mrs. Gresford suddenly recollected a letter for Dora, which she had omitted to produce.

"I had almost forgotten it," said she, present-

ing it; "and supposing it was intended for me, though under cover to you, I opened it."

Dora immediately perceived that the writing had excited too much irresistible curiosity, and her aunt struggled to conceal the mortification she had inflicted on herself by its perusal. It was an affectionate and maternal remonstrance from Lady V. on a subject already decided, but which she imagined Dora's changed circumstances afforded opportunity to review with more hope of success.

Dora herself was, at that moment, keenly alive to the change. She clearly perceived that all responsibility and exertion must devolve upon her; that no one seemed inclined to enter into new duties, or even to recognize a reason for them; and her spirit sank within her. Then it was true that for her there existed no such necessity. Why should she become the slave of those who were rather disgusted than thankful for the benefits she was conferring? Why not leave idleness and ingratitude to their merited fate, and having made plain the way to

a respectable subsistence for her relatives, leave them to pursue it for themselves? Why not accept the home to which she might be warmly welcomed at Leighton Manor? Why not yield at least to Lady V.'s entreaties that she would pay her an oft-proposed visit? There were many inducements to either or all of these temptations, which no sooner gained a hearing than they gathered plausibly and enticingly round her heart, until, suddenly terrified at the labyrinth into which her thoughts had been betrayed, Dora cast herself and her "burden" again upon the Lord, and remembered that it is written, "Whatsoever is born of God overcometh the world: and this is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith;" that "If ye do good to them which do good to you, what reward have ye? for sinners also do even the same. If ye lend to them of whom ye hope to receive, what thank have ye? for sinners also lend to sinners, to receive as much again. But love ye your enemies, and do good, and lend, hoping for nothing again; and your reward

shall be great, and ye shall be the children of the Highest; for he is kind unto the unthankful and to the evil."

"And is it not by patient continuance in well-doing that thy children shall put to silence the ignorance of the foolish?" said Dora. "O God, keep me while trying to minister to those who are almost widowed and fatherless in their affliction, keep me unspotted from the world. Thou, who hast spoken peace unto thy people, suffer them 'not to turn again to folly.'"

In a few days Helen, who had been visiting where some generous friend, by anonymous remittance, had enabled Mrs. Severn to remove with Esther for the benefit of the air, returned to her duties, now rendered happy and pleasant by changes in the domestic administration; and the day arrived on which the school was to open with five pupils, in addition to the children of the family.

On hearing of the probability of visits from strangers, Mrs. Gresford and Clara declared their intention to remain in their own apart-

ments, and that on Dora must devolve the duties of the day.

"But, dear aunt," said Dora, "if it would not pain you too much, I trust you will permit it to be seen that we have the wisdom and experience of a mother's head and heart among us, and that our friends are not committing their children to the care of mere inexperienced girls."

"It is impossible, Dora," said Mrs. Gresford coldly; "the scheme is wholly yours, and you must take its consequences."

"I shall not be visible," said Clara, enjoying Dora's disappointment. "What do you purpose, Augusta?"

"I," said Augusta, who was arranging some flowers in the vases for Dora, "I am going to be good for once. We are too hard upon poor Dora, and I am tired of walking upon the stilts of indignation at poverty and dependence. It will afford a little variety and amusement to me to see some people, and help Dora to play the governess."

"Thank you, dear Augusta," said her cousin.

"And now try to prevail on my aunt to countenance us, if only for a few minutes."

But Augusta took an opportunity to hint, privately, that she thought her mother's present temper would not enhance the attractions of the establishment, and it would be wiser to waive the point.

With the sound of the first arrival Clara rushed to her mother's sitting-room, where they locked themselves safe from the intrusion of the vulgar people who might feel an interest in making themselves acquainted with the temporary guardians of their children.

Then a gentle, ladylike woman led forward her two little girls, and Dora, with a beating heart, bade them an affectionate welcome to their new home, while the mother, without seeming bent on scrutiny, observed the emotions that agitated her with sympathy and interest. The children glanced furtively at their new instructress with gradually subsiding fears, and finally bounded away with Augusta to be introduced to her youthful sisters.

SELF-DENIAL REWARDED.

"Dear Miss Leighton," said the anxious mother, "it is only the knowledge of your principles and character which has influenced me in the choice of instructors for my children. I have corresponded with the heads of the establishment in all our preliminary arrangements, but it is to you personally that I delegate the charge which God has imposed on me to train them for his service and glory."

Dora's heart thrilled with surprise and joy, and her countenance beamed with animation as she replied:

"Then, dear madam, from one aware of the sacredness of such a charge I may rely upon the dayly help and encouragement of prayer that I may, with God's help, fulfill my duty."

"I trust so indeed, for I know that only he can supply your need of patience, and self-denial, and faithfulness in your trying task. I commit my children to your care, not only to be benefited in health, and their intellects cultivated by discipline and study, but to be taught to follow you as you follow Christ; to have the

good seed of the kingdom sown in their spring-time; and may God the eternal Spirit own and bless your labors. You must feel deeply the importance of your work, but be not afraid. Allow me to leave with you a sweet soother of doubts and fears, in the language of one who understood our weakness perfectly when he said, 'Be careful for nothing; but in everything by prayer and supplication let your requests be made known unto God. And the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, shall keep your hearts and minds through Jesus Christ.'"

O, how soothing to the anxious heart of the grateful Dora was sympathy like this! How fully she felt, too, that even in the little matter of her aunt's refusal to be present was the real interest of the school consulted, since from her no response could have met the appeal of a true-hearted Christian mother. And her warm affections went more joyfully forth to the little ones as they reappeared to receive their mother's last embrace, when she knew they were the children of prayer, over whose infant heads

parental love had found its sweetest exercise in the remembrance of their immortality.

All parents, however, were not like Mrs. E.; and before the week had passed away Dora's patience was severely tried, and she rejoiced that her aunt and cousins had been spared the mortifications to which she had been exposed. The inspection of accommodations, the opinions and advices, the cautions and suggestions of parents and friends, were almost endless. Some children might be wooden dolls, and teachers perpetual-motion machines, requiring no rest, and ever to be drilling the obedient puppets. Others, it might seem, were made of glass, and discipline would break them to atoms; but none were supposed to partake of the nature of wax, likely to melt away at a warm fireside. Dora had, however, framed no code of frigid rules concerning things which render schools, in all young minds, the opposite of paradise; and knowing that, in a world of sin and sorrow, trouble and pain come inevitably and soon enough, she resolved that youthful

feet should tread as many flowers as a loving heart and judicious hand could harmlessly scatter in their path.

After some time, and much management Clara was prevailed on to give lessons in musi to two or three talented children, leaving th stupid and unpromising to more patient teachers; and as she gradually became proud of their progress, she was won to manifest some interest in the success of other efforts. Augusta already pronounced her department less irksome than she had anticipated, and even Mrs. Gresford found herself gradually involved to preside over domestic arrangements, as formerly in her own family. Thus were all, by degrees, subsiding into their respective places, under the noiseless, unostentatious influence of one superintending mind, whose energies were devoted, while her practice tended, to manifest the power of the Christian faith to the glory and praise of its Divine Bestower.

The end of the year, in the receipts of industry sufficient for the comfortable support of

the whole family, besides the security of other objects originally in view, and a measure of painful information which it became necessary to communicate, proved the wisdom that had overruled Dora's generous project into a permanent provision for the wants of her otherwise destitute and helpless relatives.

No man lives or dies, covets, gambles, speculates to himself alone: the circle widens round the spot where one plunges to his own ruin, until the distant ripple reaches to many a hearth where the victim is unprepared for its consequences. Mr. Gresford's failure caused that of several other persons who had too confidingly reposed upon his honor; and so great was the indignation excited by his disappearance that his creditors resolved, if possible, to hinder his departure from the country, and to compel him to stand the strict investigation of the law.

To this end information was spread wherever it was probable that he might seek a temporary hiding-place, and the wretched fugitive was

compelled to adopt many disguises in order to escape observation. Often he fled when no nan pursued.

There was a small house in a narrow street in London, which, notwithstanding smoke and many other nuisances that it shared in common with its dingy neighbors without, was distinguished within by such sanatory efforts as those who have "seen better days" sometimes bear with them in their descent to poverty. There was no show of pride, for the furniture was as plain and homely, and as little of it, as could possibly serve the need of its owners, but everything was scrupulously clean and in order; and the white muslin blind which shut out the view of the low and disorderly street would not have disgraced the cottage ornée of a country village.

But the pleasantest sight in the little room was the placid and contented countenance of its mistress. True it was that she was very pale and thin, and her hands were not as smooth and white as they had once been; but she was

as neatly dressed after the day's work, and her hair as carefully disposed as ever, when at the well-known knock she hastened to admit her husband, who would now remain at home to profit by her little preparations for his pleasure and comfort.

Then tea was made; and while the baby slept in the cradle, and the elder child, having supped before, was treated to a picture book to keep him amused and quiet, the parents sat down to their evening meal.

But there was a disturbing element in the house, notwithstanding the good management of Mrs. West; for overhead sounded the indefatigable step of a restless lodger, who seemed to possess in his own proper person some clew to perpetual motion.

Mr. West's care-worn countenance, which had begun to reflect something of his wife's cheerfulness, resumed its weary and clouded aspect.

"Fanny," said he, laying down his knife and fork, "that noise distresses me too much to eat

in comfort what your thoughtful kindness has provided. I must go up and beg of him to go elsewhere."

"It is very uncomfortable, to be sure," said Fanny; "but you know it is not easy to get a respectable lodger in a neighborhood like this, and he does seem to have been a gentleman. I am afraid he is in some sad trouble; for I don't think he has eaten anything all day since a very poor breakfast."

"I wish we had inquired more about him," said Mr. West; "but poverty makes one, or rather perhaps I should say tempts one, to act contrary to one's better judgment. How thankful I should be if we could pay our rent without taking a lodger at all. You see, if it had not been for that Gresford failure I should have kept my situation, and been able soon to look up again a little in the world."

"Never mind it now," said Mrs. West, cheerfully; "think rather how happy it was that you were not thrown out of employment altogether, for any length of time, and that we have still

food and shelter. Come now, don't let your supper get cold."

"You are right, Fanny, to look at the bright side of things, but that noise made me feel irritable and discontented. I will just go and prevail on him to have something to eat, and so stop his everlasting tread, for a while at least. I've known misery myself; and if one's own folly has wrought it, it is very hard to bear."

And, somewhat to Mrs. West's momentary annoyance, her husband placed his own untouched cutlet and cup of tea on a little tray, and proceeded to the room above. The footstep ceased only for a minute, while the offer of refreshment and the voice of kindness were abruptly rejected; and Mr. West returned disappointed to take his meal in silence.

"Fanny," said he, after the children were asleep, and his wife had seated herself to needlework, ready to listen to the reading with which he often indulged her, "do you remember this time two years ago?"

"Yes," she replied; "but I like much better

to think of one year ago, when all was well again."

"Well, do you call it? It was certainly the first step toward improvement. But when, through my own folly, I lost my first situation, and threw after it my own character and your happiness, Fanny, what a monster I became! What hardships and poverty I earned for us both! Truly I found that 'the way of transgressors is hard.'"

"But when, after a season of humiliation and sorrow, we began to 'seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness,' have not all other things been added to us, dear husband?" interposed Fanny. "And when, through his losses by Mr. Gresford's failure, your employer was obliged to dismiss you, we were not forsaken, though cast down."

"All true; I gratefully acknowledge it," said Mr. West. "And now that I have learned to put things in their right places, and the real aim and end of a rational and immortal being in this life, it seems of little consequence what

position we fill, so long as it is that which God's providence appoints, and his favor blesses."

Fanny loved to hear such words from her husband's lips; but she, nevertheless, wondered what induced this train of thought just now.

"I have had a lesson to-day, Fanny," said he, "a profitable one, I hope; and it has placed me and my conduct under circumstances far less difficult and aggravating, in a very self-condemning light. I went to thank our kind benefactor for adding to the many kindnesses he has conferred since he first took an interest in us, that of procuring for me occupation to keep us from want; and there I saw a man, young, educated, and fit for anything good in the world, whose fortune was lost, and his prospects blighted, by the very same means as those which caused our late troubles; but he is a Christian man, and has the faith that overcomes everything. Yet my heart aches for him; and I would not be the villain who has wronged him for worlds. I wish our lodger up stairs knew how to bear his troubles, whatever they may be,

but half as well," added Mr. West with a sigh, as the heavy tread again became more hasty and obtrusive.

"Perhaps he has never learned the secret," said Fanny. "Don't you think you might venture up with his candle, which he has not yet rung for, and just look to his fire, and say some kind word that might comfort him?"

"I wish I could," said Mr. West, rising immediately to adopt the thoughtful suggestion; "I should like to exercise toward another the pity and kindness that have been shown to me. Where might I have been now, if I had been left to my own wicked meditations?"

The candle was placed on the table, the dying embers stirred together, and still the landlord lingered and hesitated, until the lodger turned on him a forbidding look, which seemed to say, "Why do you not leave the room?"

"I entreat your pardon, sir, for intruding on you," said Mr. West; "but it is lonely up here, and if you would join us at our cheerful fireside below—"

"No, thank you," was the quick reply; "I prefer to be alone."

"We fear you are not well, sir," continued Mr. West; "and even if you will not permit us to minister to the body, we would gladly ask you to share with us the food and comfort which we have found soothing to the mind."

"My good friend, I really thank you for your kind intentions, but I do not need your aid. I am certainly harassed by many causes of vexation and trouble, and fear I am causing some annoyance to your peace; but it will not last long. I shall probably leave in a day or two, and beg that you will not disturb yourself on my account."

"I would only remind you of One who is 'a very present help in time of trouble,' who can deliver us from the fear of evil tidings, and defend us from all real injury from men or circumstances in this life," said the kind-hearted Christian. "I know what the anxious mind and restless foot can do for a man, and what the peace of God and the ark of refuge can do for

the same man. May you, sir, know the blessed secret, and then you will understand and forgive the intrusion of a stranger upon sorrow that seems to have no sympathy;" and Mr. West returned to his own little parlor, thanking God for the unspeakable mercy of his own deliverance from the state of mind which he now witnessed with pain and pity in another.

His visit, however, had not been wholly in vain, for, provoked at being observed, the restless lodger ceased his promenade, and allowed it to be supposed that he retired and slept.

Two or three mornings afterward, and at an early hour, before even men of business are usually stirring abroad, a gentleman called on Mr. West.

"I just came to mention," said he, retreating as he saw the little party assembled at their morning meal, "that the person who has had charge of the offices where I am now engaged is leaving them this week, and I thought perhaps you might like the opportunity of removing into a more pleasant neighborhood. The

unoccupied rooms are cheerful and airy in comparison with these, and the rent will be amply discharged by your attention to the order and cleanliness of the offices every day. You can just consider it, and let me know your decision in the evening."

"There is no need of considering it, sir," replied Mr. West, glancing at the pale countenances of his wife and delicate-looking children; "we shall all be most thankful for the change; and again I thank God for such a friend as Mr. Leighton, who has interested you so kindly for me and mine."

"I must not stay now, even while you praise my uncle," said Mark Leighton; "but it is more pleasant still to hear you give thanks where they are chiefly due, and if you come to S. treet, we will sometimes speak together on that subject."

"All other things shall be added unto you," whispered Mrs. West, to her husband, smiling through tears of gratitude. "Who ever trusted God's promises and lacked any needful thing?

We shall now soon look strong and well again, and you will have nothing left to desire."

Just then the lodger, who had made his arrangements on the previous evening, was descending the stairs with his portmanteau, and had shrunk back into the darkness of the narrow passage as Mark withdrew; he then reappeared, with a large cap drawn over his brow and other indications of incognito, and, rapidly as his burden permitted, strode away.

Mr. West paused a moment at his door, looking after the two persons who had just quitted it in different directions, and involuntarily instituting in his own mind a contrast between them, though concerning one he was not aware how nearly his conjectures approached the truth.

On one side went Mark Leighton away to his new manner of life in dayly toil, his head erect with conscience void of offense toward man, and resolutely acquiescent in the providential circumstances with which his Father in heaven was trying, and at the same time sustaining his faith. His heart was peaceful, and his elastic

step loitered not, for he had made over, for the present, his time and energies to another; and if some thought his conscience strained at "gnats," he had no "camels" in reserve for private digestion, when human eyes were not cognizant of his actions. He held his responsibilities and character direct from God, for him they were to be "occupied," and to him accounted for; and with the highest motive the performance of the humblest duty was sanctified and secured.

But on the other way went the cautious step of guilt and remorse, of pride chained to humiliation and disappointment; and there was "no peace" in such "goings."

Some hours after, a merchant vessel was rapidly quitting the sight of land, and this person might again have been seen, leaning over the side, straining his eyes to retain the last view in the horizon.

Man needs not to be all vile to be ruined and wretched; he may be covetous, immoral, godless, and yet be susceptible of tender affections

and thrilling emotions: he may even love the country from which his own pride is driving him, and yearn for the home scene which he has robbed of its enjoyments and its respectability; and spasms of agony at separation, banishment, and degradation, may writhe and torment his soul, such as the condemned malefactor might pity and be spared.

What wonder if at such a moment the enemy suggests to "the fool who hath said in his heart there is no God," or who has lived in practical disregard of his existence and commands, that man is at liberty to defy the future, and to act as if it were his own deliberate choice to live and suffer, or die and be free?

As darkness settled down upon the last line of English landscape, the fugitive passenger held in his hand a little vial which had been in his possession for the last few miserable weeks. The purpose for which it had been procured had now passed away; pursuit and capture were phantoms, no longer haunting every scene, and liberty, with a future however gloomy, was yet

before him. Life was again worth an effort, and despair need not cast away the chance; so the hand relaxed its grasp, and the little vial was whirled into the foam of the ship's trail.

"There are other means, if it must come to that at last," was the reflection as it fell. Then that passenger went through the circumstances of a voyage like others, ill and well, fearless in sunshine and timid in storm, eating and drinking, and trifling like others, and at last landed on a foreign shore, where, sometimes, among men of business he heard his own name mentioned with epithets of scorn or disgrace. He sought employment, but he had neither references nor testimonials to win confidence or even attention, and want and sickness at last prostrated his hopes and efforts. Friendless and uncared for, preëminently alone, on the brink of eternity, where a Saviour's arm would have been mighty to save, and an all-sufficient provision for every need had it been accepted when offered in past opportunities neglected and despised, among strangers he died, and strangers made for him a

pauper's grave. A memorandum found after his decease requested that his family might be informed of the fact, under the discarded name of Gresford.

Pity may pause over such an end, but language cannot too strongly deprecate the pride and folly which wrought it. They are society's besetting sins. The wealthy aim to be regal, the prosperous live as if already rich, the poor strain after independence, and all "pierce themselves through with many sorrows," being discontented with such things as they have, and their idea of sufficiency consisting always in something more than they possess. Nothing but Divine grace can teach man the difficult lesson of the place of human duty, and the peaceful limit of human wishes; and so long as the threescore and ten fleeting years of life are exclusively spent in struggles after the world's riches and distinctions, hearts must remain unsatisfied, and souls must depart in disappointment and darkness.

CHAPTER XIII.

WRETCHED HEARTS.

I will bring the blind by a way that they knew not; I will lead them in paths that they have not known: I will make darkness light before them, and crooked things straight.—Isaiah xliii, 16.

Mr. Croyden and his daughter went abroad, the former seeing acted over again, in measure, the impatience of opposition and indulgence of discontent which, many years before, he had sought to solace in excitement and change. Sometimes he was shocked at the petulance and disgust which Mabel exhibited at life and the world around her; then a fit of remorse seemed to seize her, and for many days she would suppress every murmur, devote herself to his wishes and comfort, and endeavor to manifest some grateful appreciation of his anxious efforts to gratify and amuse her.

"What has done you so much good to-day, Mabel?" he one day asked when this happier temper was in the ascendant.

"O, a letter from Dora, noble Dora Leighton: it always does me good to hear from her; it rouses me from my selfishness, and, for a time, makes me feel that there is something worth living for besides the world which I have renounced. I wish she were here to maintain her influence."

Mabel had evidently not yet submitted herself to an influence which preserves a more enduring consistency, and is altogether above the caprice of uncertain stimulant.

"And what does Miss Leighton live for?" asked Mr. Croyden.

"For the benefit of all who enjoy the happiness of knowing her, I do sincerely believe," replied Mabel warmly. "But that is not just the way in which she would describe it. She would say, and in her it would be true, that the purpose of existence is to serve and glorify God in every position and circumstance which his

providence appoints." And Mabel's voice faltered, and she remained for some time silent.

"Dora is very like the Severns, papa," she abruptly exclaimed; "their sentiments and hers completely agree."

"You are a warm friend, my dear Mabel, and may over-estimate people's characters when they are kind to you."

"Ah, dear papa, have I not learned a lesson of discrimination lately? Mrs. B. made a great profession of regard for me, and abandoned me when most I needed a friend. Dora had never made any profession at all, and came to me when I was alone and friendless, not only to soothe, and comfort, and watch over me in sickness, but to try to teach me how to bear it, and its frightful consequences. Some people may be very kind to a part of us, but Dora was a true friend to all your child, papa, for she ministered to the immortal spirit, while benefiting the mortal body."

"If such ministrations had made you happy,

my dear child, I should have appreciated them more gratefully."

"The failure is not Dora's fault, papa. She presented to me what she believed the remedy for all my mental or moral disorders, but I have not taken it yet. I am more and more dissatisfied with myself, and feel that if I had not lost that which made the world's attention pleasant and acceptable, I had not been roused to a sense of the necessities and destinies of a higher and better portion of my being."

Mr. Croyden looked uneasily at his daughter, as she thus expressed the feelings of her heart. She was all that remained to him to love, and he trembled lest such thoughts should proceed from a consciousness of remaining weakness, and a presentiment of early removal.

"Don't look anxious, papa," said Mabel with tears in her eyes, and affectionately placing her hand in his; "I am quite well now, but I wish I were happier. Can you not help me? Dear, dear papa, can we not both try to serve God together?"

Mr. Croyden's inmost feelings writhed beneath that appeal as if a scorpion had stung some tender spot. Thus had her mother once sought to win him to God, and he would not. She was soon afterward removed to serve him in holier companionship, and now her voice once more pleaded in her child; that child in whom he had never sought to plant one thought of "the better land," yet for whom, perhaps, now were the prayers of years long past, from lips now silent in the grave, about to receive an answer. The coincidence carried back his mind through the period in which he had been toiling to live soberly, righteously, and godly in the world, by which means to build a link of reunion with her, but in which no desire for God's glory, or the necessity of Christ's atonement, had ever consecrated a single effort, or sanctified a single motive.

He could not bear thus to see his past works prostrated, his merits disowned, his hope annihilated, by an admission that anything more was needful; and he coldly replied:

"I hope I have been serving God to the best of my ability, Mabel; and though I do not make any ostentatious display of my religion, it may not be the less sincere, or deficient in those practical duties which are the best expressions of a creed."

"But, papa," persisted Mabel, "you do not say anything about the Lord Jesus Christ as the substance of your creed, nor of love to him as the source of your practice. It is something in connection with him that constitutes Dora's and Mr. Severn's religion, and they don't seem to think anything else is real religion at all."

"I presume their theology is not necessarily the rule for mine," said Mr. Croyden.

"No, but the Bible is the rule for us all, you know, papa, and the New Testament is full of him; therefore they must be right in that."

"My dear Mabel," said Mr. Croyden, smiling condescendingly, "you are too young yet to be aware that every fanatic will endeavor to prove his fancies from the Bible."

"He may attempt it," replied Mabel, sturdily;

"but he will find that it flatly contradicts him somewhere. I looked carefully through the history of the Lord Jesus Christ, and all that the apostles preached and wrote about him, but I could not find a contradiction of the frequent statement that salvation is by him alone: besides which, I remember Dora said that God's Spirit teaches those who believe in Jesus, and is their safe guide to all truth."

"Miss Leighton would have made a controversialist of you, I think, Mabel," said Mr. Croyden.

"I wish she could make a Christian of me, just like herself," replied Mabel. "But, papa, shall I read to you every day from the Bible? I promised Dora that I would read it for myself as a learner; but I continually forget until a letter from her reminds me of my neglected task."

"Of my neglected task!" Alas! poor Mabel had not found in it the "bread of life," the "lamp to her path," her mother's jewel-case. But she had advanced a step; and in connecting all

true religion with Jesus Christ, "God manifest in the flesh," faith, though but as a grain of mustard-seed, might, by the grace of God, be lodged yet unacknowledged in her heart.

But Mr. Croyden did not encourage the subject; and the tender bond of Christian love, that might have linked their hearts in one blessed pursuit, was still unwoven. Mr. Croyden continued in his self-righteousness, and his daughter, thrown back upon herself, vainly sought, everywhere but where it is to be found, something that would interest and occupy her vacant energies, and silence the anxieties of an awakening conscience. She tried books, and resolved to become learned; but the remembrance of Walter Severn came withering up that idea, for he had found only disappointment. She would poetize and write sentimental lamentations upon fate, but not having courage to submit her effusions to inspection, the stimulant of human praise was wanting, and failing such oil, the tiny lamp expired of itself. She was rich, and as a sister of charity perhaps

some unfortunates might bless her, and the consciousness of being useful and doing good might dissipate ennui, and successfully engage her perseverance; but two or three instances of imposition sufficed to disgust her, and she resigned herself to the conviction that she was unfit for any position in earth or heaven.

A restless desire to wander then gave place to one equally restless to return home, to be near Dora Leighton; and having visited many scenes of interest and instruction abroad, Mr. Croyden decided to make the tour of the south of England on their return to Helme.

At a beautiful spot on a rocky southern shore they paused in admiration, where Mr. Croyden yielded to his daughter's wish to remain for some time, and Mabel set out to explore, among the romantic retreats which were tastefully scattered among the rocks, for a temporary abode more retired and suitable than the neighboring hotel. She had unconsciously passed from the public path through an open gate into the garden, and on finding herself approaching a pretty cottage,

was about to retrace her way, when it occurred to her that possibly this cottage might happen to be vacant, and with a noiseless step she again advanced. A lattice wreathed with creeping plants extended a short distance from the house, concealing any person who might have entered from the view of the front windows, and affording the shelter of a pleasant arbor to a party on the other side. Here a sweet mingling of voices in the evening air caught Mabel's charmed attention, and arrested her step. The words of a hymn were distinctly audible:

"The slave of sin and fear,
Thy truth my bondage broke;
My happy spirit loves to wear
Thy light and easy yoke:
The love which fills my grateful breast
Makes duty joy, and labor rest.

"Soon the bright, glorious day,
The rest of God shall come;
Sorrow and sin shall pass away,
And I shall reach my home:
Then of the promised land possess'd,
My soul shall know eternal rest."

"That last verse is mine peculiarly now, is it not, dear mother?" said a weak but cheerful voice. "I sometimes think I am something of a coward, to be so anxious to reach my home, when it would be nobler to stay and strive with you against the adversities and trials of life. How much happier is my lot than our dear Helen's."

"I trust you are each doing your heavenly Father's will, my Esther; you in joyful anticipation of glorious sight, Helen in the obedience of faith for a little longer time. Shrink not from realizing, as fully as you are favored to do so, the bright happiness of your portion, for it is given to you by Him who appoints all our times, whether of work or rest."

"I ought to have made better use of my time to work, mamma; but Jesus is so gentle a master, 'he upbraideth not.' What a marvelous thing is salvation; and that such a timid, helpless, sinful thing as I should be permitted to enjoy it so completely! My heart seems to bound with delight and love, and my memory is

inscribed with remembrances of the faithfulness and tenderness of Christ. O! why is not our report believed? why is he still despised him rejected of men?"

Mabel dared not to hesitate longer; she advanced to the front of the arbor, and was welcomed with maternal kindness by Mrs. Severn, and with cordial pleasure by the dying girl.

She saw that to mourn for Esther would have been only folly. Esther had been twice to try the efficacy of change of air, the first time with some apparent improvement; but on the present visit she had passed the stage of her complaint in which anything beyond temporary relief could be obtained; and when conscious of the fact, she had but one wish more, which was to return to her earthly home, that she might pass from the arms of both her beloved parents to the presence of her Father in heaven.

When, after much solemn and interesting conversation, Mabel rose to return to her father, Esther proposed that Mrs. Severn should

accompany her a short distance for the pleasure of the walk.

"But you cannot be left alone," said Mabel.

"O! I have another kind nurse here," replied Esther; "my brother is quite able to take care of me, and I shall like to be left with him for a while."

Walter Severn had just appeared at the lower part of the garden from some steps cut in the rock, and with a sad and weary air, paced slowly toward them.

Mabel gazed upon these two sources of sorrow to a loving parent's heart, and then at the calm and chastened countenance of their mother, and she wondered doubly; first, that a God who loved her could so afflict, and that such affliction could be borne so meekly. She was not yet in possession of the secret.

As Mrs. Severn and Mabel departed together, Walter sat down by his sister's couch.

"I am always trying to hope you will yet recover, my sweet Esther," said he. "How do you feel to-night?"

"More and more assured that I shall soon be gone, dear brother, and more anxious to use every moment that remains to me. Are you able to attend to what I want to say?"

"Yes, I think so," said he; "I will try to treasure your words." And he bent tenderly over her, to lose nothing she would utter, and to prevent the necessity of exerting her voice.

"You know, dear Walter, that when our dear parents are called into the presence of God, they will find me there already, and they are quite sure that Helen is on the way; but you, Walter, where will you be?"

"I do not know," said Walter, startled at such an address.

"But you may know, if you will; and it would be the removal of the only sorrow that can cloud my last hour, if you will seek to know it at the feet of Jesus."

"You forget how God has afflicted me, sister."

"No, it is because he has afflicted you that I hope for you; you were ambitious and proud,

and he has humbled you; but you have intervals of recollection and self-control which afford you opportunity to acknowledge your sin, and to apply to Him whose blood cleanseth from all sin, and who might be entreated to restore your lost powers if you would devote them to his glory, instead of arraying them in impotent opposition to his word and will. Will you grant my dying wish, Walter? Cease to mourn over lost intellectual energies and attainments, and think of the lost soul which you bear within you, until you take it to Jesus to be saved. So will our parents have two children left to comfort them, so shall we all meet to enjoy eternity together."

"Do you think that God could make me again what I once was?" said Walter, with animation.

"He can re-make you better and nobler than you ever were, my brother, my precious brother! Kneel down, and let us ask him while yet my strength and yours is spared."

Awed and agitated, he obeyed her voice; and

for the first time her timid spirit had ever broken through the diffidence which withheld the effort, her lips poured forth over her brother's bowed head the solemn, earnest wrestling of her soul, for his awakening from death in sin, to life in Jesus Christ, and for the restoration of his mental powers, and their dedication to God's glory. When Mrs. Severn returned, Esther had almost fainted with the effort, and Walter knelt in tears, but not tears of childish passion, by her side.

The evening which had been so lovely, changed into a cloudy night, and the rising wind gave signs of a coming storm. Several vessels had anchored off the coast in evident preference of a little delay to the risk of beating about in contrary winds.

Mabel Croyden had fancied she should enjoy seeing the sea in a storm, but as she listened to the roar of the gale with the recollection of the unexpected meeting with her friends, and the assurance of Esther's approaching dissolution, vividly before her mind, she likened the tossing

of the sea, in contrast with its calm beauty at sunset, to her own restless, tempestuous heart, in contrast with the hallowed peace which beamed over the countenances and dwelt in the hearts of the mother and her dying child.

With the morning came rather increase than diminution of the storm; the tide was rising, and a ship, which had either dragged or broken her anchors, was driving toward the shore. Many hundreds of people were out upon the beach watching the result of the struggle; and as she came nearer, it was apparent that her masts were injured, her rigging unmanageable, and that her deck was crowded with human beings. A flag of distress invited assistance, but the moment had not come in which assistance could avail, and she still lurched and reeled before the combined forces which were in operation to her apparent destruction. The expectation of the fishermen and others on shore was plain, as they prepared for action all the means within their power for the preservation of life. On she came, until her passengers

could be almost counted, and their cries of terror rose above the tumult of the elements. Another plunge, and another leap over the breakers, yet once again, and she struck deep into the yielding sand. The shock was passed, many had fallen overboard, and others had successfully clung to some support on deck, while boats pushed off over the surf to save such as were battling in the water, and to shout assurances of safety to those who would patiently remain with the ship.

Among the excited spectators on shore stood Mr. Croyden and Walter Severn, anxiously watching the result of the boat expedition. Both suddenly perceived that a human body struggling with the surf had been overlooked by the fishermen, and was in danger of perishing for want of help.

"Who is a swimmer among you?" exclaimed Mr. Croyden, anxiously looking round among the people, and pointing to the spot. But before his question could be answered, a loud hurrah ran through the crowd, and Walter Severn,

having thrown off his coat, was far on his way to the rescue. He buffeted successfully with the waves until he caught the dress of the drowning woman, and then, feeling his own strength failing, he called for help, while making the best of his way with his helpless burden to the shore. Two men were wading to meet him, and happily caught them both as the last cry passed Walter's lips, and both were immediately conveyed to a cottage on the beach, where prompt attention soon restored suspended animation.

All the passengers were safely brought ashore, and kindly sheltered in the nearest habitations; and as the stranded ship still held together, there was every hope of saving property as well as life. But as much distress and discomfort must prevail among the poor emigrants whose voyage had thus been suddenly cut short, Mr. Croyden and his daughter, accompanied by Mrs. Severn, visited the cottages to minister to present necessities.

The latter was greatly surprised to find her

son among the sufferers, and hastened home to send a change of clothing, while Mabel and her father proceeded on their benevolent visits.

"Why, papa, it was Walter Severn whose exertions saved the poor woman's life," exclaimed Mabel.

"What, the poor idiot boy? Well, he showed more sense and heroism than many a sane man," said Mr. Croyden.

"He is not an idiot," replied Mabel, shocked at the application of the term to one whose talents and attainments had been the theme of surprise and admiration but two years before; "his weakness consists in the loss of his subject when any mental effort is needed to continue it, and a forgetfulness of much that he has learned. They say he is sensible enough at times."

"It was happy for that poor creature that he was sensible this morning," said Mr. Croyden. "But I think this is the cottage into which she was carried; let us inquire if she is quite restored."

"Indeed, ma'am, she seems very odd," replied the cottager to Mabel's inquiry. "She has been sadly frightened, poor thing; but a guilty conscience is a bad companion at sea especially in a storm."

"Can you not comfort her with the assurance of present safety?" said Mabel.

"I have done my best, my lady; but perhaps you could speak to her more gentle like. Will you please to try?" And leading the way, she ushered Mabel into an inner room, where the poor woman sat shivering by the fire in dry garments kindly supplied by her hostess, and pale and wan with recent fear and weakness.

At the sight of her visitor she started up, advanced, and then suddenly retreated with a stifled exclamation of terror, and covering her face with her hands.

"Do not be alarmed at me," said Mabel, kindly; "I am only anxious to know if it is in my power to serve you."

"O no, no; go away, if you please. O, why

couldn't I die when I had the chance?" she muttered.

"It has pleased God to spare you, I hope for your own good," said Mabel; "and if you are unhappy, he is able to comfort you."

"Not me, not me! let me go!" exclaimed the woman, with a sudden rush to the door; but she had miscalculated her strength, and fell into the arms of the astonished cottager, who, shaking her head, remarked that something must be wrong in her mind.

But the voice, and the countenance, now unconcealed, had been recognized by Mabel, and with unfeigned surprise and some suspicion she gazed until thoroughly satisfied, and she softly said,

"Janet! is it possible?" and visions of the empty chests and wardrobes in her mother's room rose rapidly in her mind.

"O, don't send me to prison, Miss Mabel don't let me be hung. Indeed I will confess all, but I can't get them back again now," sobbed the terrified woman in agony.

All Mr. Croyden's efforts to trace his daughter's waiting-maid had proved ineffectual; and great was his satisfaction to find her thus, by a remarkable and detecting Providence, thrown into his sight at the moment she had supposed herself placing an impassable barrier between the laws of her country and her own deserts.

She related the story of the sin already in her terror confessed; and so great was her excitement, in addition to the alarm and exposure of the night, and her weakness from a frightful cough which shook her frame, that it seemed probable the interference of an earthly tribunal might be superseded by a higher and irresistible summons.

It appeared that the constant anticipation of her promised treasures, the possession of which was the hope of Mabel's young life, had kindled within the heart of her vain and silly attendant, an idea that the happiness and distinction they were to impart to her young mistress might be advantageously transferred to herself; and having yielded to the temptations of dress and

amusement, so far as her circumstances would permit, she entered into the scheme of her master's valet for the robbery which they successfully effected. The jewels, they argued, could not then be said to belong to any one but the dead, and their destined owner might not live to require them; whereupon the impression was taken from the great seals which secured them, and keys being procured by Empson, the appropriation was easy.

At first the jewels were the only objects of the plot; but the sight of other valuables extended their covetousness, until the whole seemed too small to satisfy it, and they finally abstracted everything that could be removed without risk of discovery. Empson remained a few months, and Janet almost a year, in the family subsequent to the theft; when they married, and retired to a distant part of the kingdom under a feigned name.

But the spoil was too costly and unsuitable for the person and circumstances of Mr. Empson's wife, and her feelings suffered a severe

mortification when he assured her that the fine dresses and laces would never make her a lady; and he insisted that they should all be sold, and the money appropriated to his own especial use; a proceeding which he said she would regard with gratitude when the theft should be discovered, and a hue and cry should be raised through the country.

However, nothing prospered with the guilty pair; and after sorrows and sufferings which conscience declared richly merited, Empson became a drunkard, and abandoned his wife to the parish; soon after which he joined a gang of house-breakers, and was finally apprehended, tried, and transported for life. Mrs. Empson again went to service, but having accidentally met with a servant who had resided at Helme when the robbery was discovered, and who mentioned the names of persons whom Mr. Croyden had been desirous to trace, and among them her own, she resolved to leave the country, and had taken her passage for that purpose in the emigrant vessel which had just been strand-

ed in sight of those from the dread of whose detection she was flying.

"Were you conscious," asked Mabel, "that you left one thing in the wardrobe?"

"Yes, Miss Mabel, we left your mamma's Bible. I remember seizing it, thinking it was something else, and I dropped it as if it had been a viper; but Empson put it back laughing, and saying it might console the young mistress for the loss of the vanities of the world."

"I always thought you loved me, Janet, and sympathized in my wish to possess my mother's property."

"Ah, Miss Mabel, you didn't know that people haven't any real love for those they flatter; and the more you talked about it, and about being a lady, the more I wished to try if such things would not make me happy and beautiful as wel as you."

"And had you no compunctions of conscience about injuring those who were kind to you, Janet?"

"I thought you were kind to me because yo-

wanted my services, and that when you were tired of me I should be turned away. You know, Miss Mabel, you were very fond of new people and things."

"I do not wonder at the miseries you have since endured. Mrs. Severn said truly that the conscience of the thief would prove far more cruel than my disappointment. How sad it was that you had not made the Bible your guide instead of your terror, Janet."

"Ah, but who ever taught us to look into the Bible for direction?" said Janet. "Our bodies were well taken care of at the Lodge, I know; but who ever cared for our souls? O, my dear young lady, if you had only talked to me about God and his commands, and about Jesus, and salvation, I do believe I never should have had the heart to do that wickedness. My master seemed to think there was nothing to do but to give orders and be obeyed, and you wished only to grow up and be admired in the world; so the servants were left to themselves, as if they had nothing to do but be ready to serve

you when wanted. I have lived in a Christian family since, and I've learned the difference, to my sorrow."

"You heard the Gospel preached," said Mabel, stung to the quick at this reproof.

"Yes; but forgive me, Miss Mabel, for you have encouraged me to speak freely, one example in the house is worth twenty sermons in the church to all the servants in the world. I've heard them say it again and again, and I know it is true; but, God forgive me, I've no right to blame anybody for my own wickedness, and I must answer for it before him myself."

"O," thought Mabel, "could not Dora's gospel be available here? Dare I tell her that the Lord Jesus Christ will answer for it in her behalf, if she will but believe in him?" Fearful of making mistakes, and offering groundless hopes, Mabel consulted Mrs. Severn, and brought her to the bedside of the unhappy Janet, who had become seriously ill, and with wonder and delight, heard proclaimed in fearlessness and simplicity, to the guilty conscience of the

thief, the very same Gospel as that which Dora had declared to her in her affliction, the very same hopes and promises to living faith as those on which the comparatively innocent and spiritualized Esther reposed so sweetly on the verge of the grave.

At his daughter's earnest entreaty, Mr. Croyden abstained from the course of the law in the case of the criminal so long sought for, and during the short period of their stay, permitted Mabel to provide for the necessities of the invalid, until the recovery of health might enable her to prove her penitence for the past, in honest industry for the future. But Janet was most thankful for the truths of grace and pardon which Mabel read to her from the word of God; and ere they parted, it seemed that those who, some years before, had been instrumental in each other's injury, had been permitted now to meet to minister to each other's benefit. Janet's wants brought out the full, free Gospel in all its grand provision for the uttermost need of sinners; and as the eternal Spirit breathed the quicken-

ing principle of life into her soul, Mabel was enabled to perceive, to appreciate, and to solicit for herself the same power, the same gift, the same guide to the feet of a loving and forgiving Saviour.

Now, through the mist of her spiritual morning, came the beams of the Sun of Righteousness, as he rose with healing in his wings. Now over the struggles and repinings of a thwarted will came the stilling influences of recognized wisdom and loving authority. Now over the chaotic region of blighted, because misapplied, hopes and talents came the new-creating touch of order, harmony, and grace; and in the light of Divine instruction Mabel now read the motto of the Saviour's advent, "Glory to God in the highest, on earth peace, good-will toward men." And as she prayed for grace henceforth to prolong that sound, love echoed back to love, and sweet security to obedient and happy duty.

"May God bless her," said the penitent Janet. "I thought at first that she was sadly

altered from the beautiful child that she was when she was pleased; but she is rich indeed, and beautiful indeed now, in riches that cannot be stolen, and beauty that cannot fade."

CHAPTER XIV.

DEATH SCENES.

He shall sit as a refiner and purifier of silver.—Malachi iii, 3.

As soon as possible after her arrival at Helme Lodge, Mrs. Severn and her children having already reached home, Mabel hastened to inquire how Esther had borne the journey. As she walked along, and remarked the change with which autumn had swept over the face of nature, she endeavored to realize in contrast the change she had herself experienced. Externally, indeed, she was inclined to think it was autumn still, because of the blight which had come over the features she had prized so much; but it was spring-time in her heart She had passed through a dull, dead winter, and buds were springing from a lately barren branch. The Husbandman had been cutting

down thistles and thorns, and planting in their stead the fig-tree and the vine; and from a good root good fruit should surely grow.

"What a delightful change!" thought Mabel "I have an object in life now that I never thought of before, and which it seemed only Dora and the Severns were capable of attaining. But I understand it for myself, for my own enjoyment and pursuit; it is worthy of immortal creatures, and with it surely, surely I shall never be dull and discontented again. For me, the vain, frivolous, idle Mabel Croyden, to be called, and saved, and made happy forever, to serve and glorify God, O, blissful vocation! Father, Saviour, Spirit, help me, for it is too great and wonderful for my feeble faith to grasp!"

Mabel's approach was perceived from within, and Helen Severn, with a faint attempt to smile, embraced her affectionately, and, signing to her to step softly, led her forward to the sitting-room.

On a couch, near the window, lay Esther

Severn, and on either side knelt her parents, by whom she was partly supported. Her head rested on her mother's shoulder, and her hand fondly clasped that of her father. Helen and Walter knelt at her feet, and the attached domestic, who had attended her from infancy, stood a few paces distant, tearfully contemplating the scene. Death was hovering over that sweet flower, whose roots were all loosened from the earth, ready for transplantation; but in no array of terror or distress was his appearance there. On the face of the dying girl there shone a brilliant beauty that had seemed to indicate yet a little while more of lingering life; but it was only the prelude to departure, as the flash precedes the expiring light.

"Mamma, dear mamma," said she in a faint yet distinct voice, and smiling as the allusion crossed her mind, "the King holds out the golden scepter, and his Esther longs to draw nigh. How mercifully I am spared all pain and fear! No word but love can express the Christian's God. My father, you have preached

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the truth. Preach on, save souls, let Christ be glorified. Helen, dear sister by nature, and dearer still by grace, persevere, keep close to Jesus; he is faithful and true, chief among ten thousand, altogether lovely. Walter, remember—" said she solemnly, and paused. "Father, mother, we shall all meet again, all, I am sure of it. And Mabel Croyden, dear Mabel, she is now a trophy for the Redeemer's crown. Farewell for a little while; I am called. I come, my Saviour. Worthy is the Lamb; I come to join the song:" and as her voice faded off to the softest whisper, her lips met those of her mother, and in a moment more, Esther Severn was not, for God had taken her.

Awed and tearless, all gazed upon the triumphant picture until Mr. Severn's voice rose in praise and adoration to Him through whom his child was thus "more than conqueror," and through whom they also should die the death of the righteous, and follow to joy like hers. Mabel Croyden glided softly away, and withheld the burst of sorrow that trembled within,

until she could weep and wonder, and pray alone.

There was no murmuring regret in the throb which fluttered at the mother's heart, as she saw the young villagers scatter flowers on the coffin of her child as the body was borne away to its resting place. There was natural sorrow at her own loss, but it was merged in joy for her sweet Esther's gain. She had been welcomed to life, and tended, and cherished, and trained in faith, for God, who had honored the work, accepted the offering, and suffered his visible blessing to unfold it for glory, before the eyes of his worshiping servants; and though they waited below for a little while, they found that as their day, so their strength was, and another opportunity was given to glorify God in the day of trouble, and to prove the mighty power of the Comforter's sustaining ministry.

It was not "sorrow without hope" that faltered in the father's voice, as he committed "earth to earth, ashes to ashes, dust to dust," for it was in full assurance of her joyful resurrection, when

Christ shall come to "change our vile body that it may be fashioned like unto his glorious body, according to the mighty working whereby he is able even to subdue all things to himself."

And there was no sentimental selfishness in Helen's mourning, as she realized the absence of so sweet a friend, and strove to follow her as she had followed Christ, and to fill as far as possible the vacant place to her beloved and appreciating parents. Dora Leighton, the self-denying and sympathizing Dora, insisted on her resigning her services in the school, that she might minister as a daughter and sister at home, and work out, among those to whom her presence would be dear, the graces of character which chastening and discipline had strengthened and refined during her sojourn among strangers, and in duties elsewhere.

But Walter was shaken as a reed by the wind. Esther had been his dearest and chief companion since his residence at home. She had solaced him in his sorrows, borne with his infirmities, encouraged and directed his hopes,

and his support seemed utterly gone. But she had left with him a solemn injunction, which he never forgot, and felt that he dared not disobey. Walter must meet Esther in Christ, or Walter and Esther should never meet again.

The physical shock which his system had received in rescuing the drowning Janet had reacted beneficially on his body, and the moral shock which followed in the death of his sister was succeeded by a concentrative power which his mind had previously lost, and by which it was evidently strengthened. Esther, her words, her directions, her Bible, her hope for him, became the ruling subjects of his thoughts, and he found it possible once more to attempt to study. But not in the range of learned lore, in which he had once delighted, were his researches now prosecuted. He was studying Esther's religion; he desired the knowledge of Esther's Saviour, and he resolved that if the Bible were God's revelation, by his grace he and Esther should meet again.

His father observed that books of evidence

and interpretation were occasionally withdrawn from the library, and left in his way those which were calculated to be useful; but he took occasion to dwell carefully and clearly in his family reading on the statements of the apostle, that "the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God," and that "the things of God knoweth no man, but the Spirit of God;" and that it is the office and prerogative of that Spirit to testify of Jesus to the heart and conscience of the sinner. "And," said Mr. Severn, "if any one say, how shall I obtain the Spirit? feeling that he lacks wisdom, let him ask of God, who giveth liberally, and upbraideth not. 'Ask, and it shall be given you,' said the Lord Jesus. 'If ye, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children; how much more shall your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to them that ask him?'"

Walter pondered this in his heart; he had never prayed, and therefore he could not deny what he had never tasted. It might be true; should pride hinder him from the trial? The

Spirit who had testified to Esther the glorious things of which she so positively and triumphantly spoke, must be of lofty dignity and wondrous power, if the whole were not the fancy of an excited brain, and Esther's life and death were answer sufficient to the blasphemous supposition. But Walter had been gradually drawn to the "open door" which "no man can shut," and he would no more rest until he had found it in the Shepherd's fold.

His friends observed that his favorite retirement was his sister's grave; and that, so far from encouraging a depression and melancholy state of mind, he usually returned thence with a more placid and cheerful countenance than he had worn for many minutes together since his illness. Their prayers were offered with redoubled earnestness for the consummation which Esther had so confidently anticipated; and Mr. Severn felt that all the ambitious dreams of earthly distinction, all the acquirements of mental labor, which had cost so dear a price, were well disappointed and lost, if his son

might after all but "win Christ, and be found in him," a believer at the feet of the Good Physician, "clothed" for eternal life, "and in his right mind."

"There are diversities of operations, but it is the same God who worketh all in all." His work in Mabel Croyden was by all the winning attractions of manifested love, and the sweet response of grateful affection was awakened in her heart in earnest desires to enter at once upon active proofs of the vital change she had experienced. "What shall I render unto the Lord for all his benefits toward me?" was now the important question to be answered in her dayly life. "And now, dear Mrs. Severn," said she, "will you advise me how to begin to prove that I am Christ's disciple? I feel as if my past life had been wasted, and that the days are all too short for the many things I should like to do."

"Far be it from me to check or to discourage you, my dear Mabel, in the first warmth of affectionate zeal; but your love to your Re-

deemer need not wait an instant for opportunities of manifestation. I venture to express to you my conviction, that the sweetest, holiest proof a soul can give of spiritual life is in seeking close and intimate communion with God in prayer and the study of his word. If reconciled to him by the blood of his dear Son, you will delight to be much in his presence, to consult his will, to obtain conformity to his mind; and within the constraining power of such an influence, I do not fear that you can be an idle Christian. Waiting on him, principles to sustain duty will accompany the impulses of the love that prompts it."

"I was thinking of you this morning," said Mabel, "in the history of Paul's conversion. His prayer was, 'Lord, what wilt thou have me to *do?*' But the Lord sent Ananias to 'show him what things he should *suffer* for his name's sake. You, dear Mrs. Severn, have suffered many trials; and if such should be my lot, I only ask grace to bear them as well. But I have none at present, for that which I lately thought a

deep affliction, I now see was a blessing in disguise."

"And such, I trust, will be your testimony to all God's dealings with you, my dear child. You are able experimentally already to vindicate the apostle's statement, that though 'no suffering for the present seemeth to be joyous, but grievous, nevertheless afterward it yieldeth the peaceable fruits of righteousness unto them which are exercised thereby.'"

"Then shall I for the present emulate Mary, who sat at the feet of Jesus, rather than Martha, who cumbered herself with much serving," said Mabel; "and so be ready to do or to suffer as may be appointed for me."

"You need not be searching for sorrows, Mabel, for they often arise when and whence they are least expected; none shall befall you but such as are common to man: and 'God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able; but will with the temptation also make a way to escape, that ye may be able to bear it.' If you have the will, you

will soon find the way to employ yourself for the benefit of others, and the service and honor of God. But I would advise that you examine into and perform first the duties which you find already around you, before you enter upon or contemplate new efforts. You know, dear Mabel, the lesson you learned from poor Janet was not an accident."

"Thank you, my dear, faithful friend," said Mabel; "I see now where I ought to begin; but I must still ask you to be ready, when I venture again to think I can do something more, to tell me how to tread in my dear mother's steps, in all those departments in which I have often heard you describe her activity and usefulness. I have obtained the key to her jewel-case, and must now endeavor dayly to adorn myself as you said she used to do."

Mabel soon proved the truth of Mrs. Severn' words, that troubles sometimes arise when and whence they are least looked for. She felt happiest of the happy; and assured of pardon

and acceptance through Christ, blessed with the will and the means of doing good, she saw before her a pleasant, sunny path to heaven, in which all would help, and none retard her progress. She saw no enemy greedy to devour, no fowler spreading his snares, no serpent coiled among the flowers of her new Eden; and with elastic step and buoyant spirit she returned to a consideration of her first duties as a daughter, and a mistress in her father's house.

"Well, Mabel," said Mr. Croyden one day, "you have not once complained of ennui since you returned home, and I have been vainly expecting your solicitations for some little change and company."

"You know, dear papa," replied Mabel, "you once said that you would more gratefully appreciate Miss Leighton's love and attention to me in my illness, if her ministrations had made me happy. Not Dora herself, but the gracious and kind Lord who sent her, has now taught me how to be happy, and I no

longer need the excitements and pleasures which used for a time to beguile me from my weak and foolish self."

"I am very glad to hear this, Mabel, provided you are not intending to turn Puritan, for you know you are somewhat addicted to extremes. However, I have been considering the propriety of introducing you into society here, since you have had the advantage of a season in London; and I have no doubt you will acquit yourself to my satisfaction, as the heiress of my name and property."

This idea had never once suggested itself to Mabel's mind, and she was for a moment dumb with surprise; but, recovering herself, she asked:

"Is it to gratify me, papa, that you propose this?"

"That is part of my intention, certainly, but it is due to our position in life; and I ought to enjoy the pleasure of presenting my daughter to the world, now that she is able to do the honors of my house with dignity and grace."

"Ah, papa, a year ago I should have heard this with delight; but now—"

"And what now, my Mabel?" said her father, stroking back her hair, and drawing her face fully into view. "Do you think the traces of that melancholy illness will affect your reception among those who expected you to be unusually gifted with attractions? Be assured there are quite sufficient left to gratify both them and me, so let me hear no more on that subject."

"You have heard nothing on it yet," said Mabel, half laughing at her father's mistake, and his palatable praise.

"Then what other objection would you raise?"

"I hope to be permitted to devote myself to your happiness, papa; and the retirement in which you lived before I went to London, is just the favorable opportunity on which my imagination has painted its brightest designs."

"Is this really your wish, Mabel?"

"Dear papa, I have discovered the real object of life, and, with God's help, I desire to follow

it. It is not in the world, in company, and gayety, and amusement, where I foolishly thought I was to find every enjoyment on earth, but I know now that it is in loving and serving God, and being useful to others. I cannot do this in a giddy crowd, who neither know nor love him."

Mr. Croyden's features, as he listened, passed through several phases of expression, until they settled into one of cold and rigid severity, such as seldom met the affectionate gaze of his child, and which Mabel felt was kindling within her a spirit of defiance akin to his own.

"And pray may I ask," said he, "if your decalogue still boasts the fifth commandment in its integrity, or whether you have been instructed in some convenient substitute?"

The taunt recalled Mabel to recollection of the gift that had been intrusted her, and her conversation with Mrs. Severn. Her natural inclination tempted her to assert her right to act as she chose, and to bring forward her arguments to prove that she was justified in refusal to enter

again into the vain, gay world which she had doubly renounced. But she raised her heart in secret prayer for Divine help and direction, that she might act, not according to her own preferences, but according to God's word; and she remembered that, though conformity to the world and sympathy with its ways are condemned, obedience to parents is explicitly enforced; and that in obeying her father's will, God could and would protect her from the dangers she feared in the scenes to which she must again be introduced. It would not then be loving her father more than Christ, but obeying a plain, unmistakable command under circumstances in which no other command could be found to conflict with it in the path of duty.

"No, dear papa," said she, gently, "I have learned no substitute for God's commandment, and one mean by which I shall glorify him is to honor and obey my father and my mother."

The last allusion grated painfully on Mr. Croyden's ear, but he was nevertheless propitiated, and added more kindly:

"Then be ready to gratify me in appearing at the County Assembly, and in receiving a party of visitors shortly at the Lodge."

Mr. Croyden then took up his newspaper, to avoid further discussion; and Mabel having given up Fido and butterflies, and possessed herself of a most orthodox work-basket, resigned herself to her own thoughts until she might retire to pour them out in fearless confidence to the Friend who could guide her safely through the difficulties which had suddenly sprung up in her way.

That her own inclination no longer sympathized in the gayeties and fashions of the world, she was fully assured; but in the exercise of her new-found liberty and joy she saw that much wisdom was required in one under that divinely constituted authority to which God himself has attached peculiar importance and blessedness. Next to her own salvation, that of her dear father became the solemn desire of her soul, and to thwart and annoy him with opposition to his wishes, before he had seen in the

general tone of her character more attractive proofs of the power of Divine grace, would be both imprudent and ungrateful. To honor her parent in a matter which did violence to her own inclinations, and to win, by dutiful and affectionate attention to his dayly comfort, the confidence which would induce an interest in her pursuits in return, and excite a desire to know the true motive of her actions, might prove of more avail than all the reasons she could adduce in favor of her views and feelings.

Mabel was also well aware that her father was far too watchful not to have observed the change in her demeanor, from the proud lip and flashing eye with which she had often before resented any, even his, interference with her will and pleasure; and she resolved that God's mercy should tell its own sweet story in gentle tempers and subdued wills, rather than in high profession or opposing arguments.

She conferred with no human friend until, by prayer and God's word, she had searched out the matter for herself, and was then encouraged

and gratified by Mrs. Severn's approbation of the path in which her judgment had been guided.

The formidable assembly was encountered, and Mabel played the hostess; and if not quite to her father's entire satisfaction, there was nothing with which he could reasonably find fault. He wished, perhaps, that something of her former giddy merriment had occasionally played off some flash of wit; but Mabel had evidently "put away childish things," and he was greatly edified at the grave dignity with which she silenced the tongue of flattery, or checked the outburst of levity.

When again alone she was his own cheerful, watchful, and affectionate child; and, though he rejoiced in her, he sighed, and knew not distinctly why.

"Mabel," said he, suddenly, one day, "I do not like that mausoleum; it must be pulled down, and a church must be built in Mr. Severn's parish. And there was to have been an addition to the parochial stipend, legally se

cured. Do you understand me, Mabel? I think it should be done."

"Indeed, I should rejoice to see you do it, dear papa."

"I do not say that I wish to do it, but as you have lately reminded me much of your mother, and seem to be anxious to tread in her steps, it occurs to me that you might have pleasure in carrying out this, which was her plan also."

Mabel gratefully acknowledged this unexpected proof of her father's confidence; and the sweetest praise he could bestow was in the allusion to her mother.

"I should like to know how you enjoyed so much company lately, Mabel," said he; "you have not given me your opinion of our friends."

"Friends!" said Mabel; "are those our friends?"

"Why not, pray?"

"They may be very pleasant people, after their own fashion; but I do not imagine that they or we should be much disturbed if we

were never to meet again, and that is not my idea of friendship."

"Then you do not wish visitors to come to the house to amuse you, or to assist you to pass away the time."

"No indeed, dear papa; nor to be invited for the same purpose in return."

"You will have a host of invitations almost immediately. What do you propose to do with them?"

"May I tell you without displeasing you, dear papa?" said Mabel, gazing earnestly in his face.

"Yes, speak your mind, child, if you really have decided the matter."

"I do not decide the matter, papa, because I shall act as you desire; but if I might follow my own wishes in this case, I should decline all the invitations of those acquaintances who visit for the purpose you stated, to amuse themselves, and to pass away the time. If there be any who will help me to follow the Lord Jesus Christ, I will thankfully try to make them my friends."

"Humph! did you meet with any of that sect at the assembly the other night?"

"No; I did not expect it. They would not be there except in obedience to an authority which God himself has commanded them to respect."

"I insisted upon taking you, Mabel, because I did not consider you capable of judging for yourself; and when there, I was persuaded you would enjoy yourself as completely as ever. But it seems I was mistaken."

"I did not enjoy anything, papa, but the consciousness that you were satisfied with me. If I begin to enjoy such frivolous amusements abroad, depend upon it, dear papa, I shall soon be again your petulant, discontented, selfish, indolent Mabel at home; for I shall have lost the peace which now possesses my heart, and the hope which stimulates me to higher pleasures and pursuits."

"And do you saucily hold that threat over me, in case I presume to draw out your visiting list?" asked Mr. Croyden, half smiling at the idea.

"O no!" said Mabel; "but I am very weak, dear papa; and when I pray to my Father in heaven, 'Lead me not into temptation,' can I help wishing that my father on earth may be equally willing to grant the same petition?"

"It follows," said Mr. Croyden, after a pause, "that you imagine I would lead you where it is neither profitable nor pleasant to you to go; in fact, that my authority would interfere with your duty to God. Is it not so?"

"I am not willing to put it into such sad words, my own dear father," said Mabel, the tears rushing to her eyes. "Only take me where you have some enjoyment for yourself in view, and never because you think it can gratify me."

"But if scenes of thoughtless gayety are injurious to one person, or, if you please, improper, they must be equally so to another."

"I do not think they can be good for any one," replied Mabel; "but they are only inconsistent for those to whom God has imparted a new life, a perfect change of tastes and desires.

I can give a reason why I do not wish to enter into them; but there is no reason why they are unsuitable to the gay people who have just been here, nor that they could be expected to resign them while they have nothing better to take their place."

"You are involving yourself in a strange mystification, I fear, Mabel; but as I certainly have no particular desire for gayety, I shall permit you to be happy in your own way, with perhaps a rare occasional exception. Had your new religion made you disobedient, it would have met less indulgence at my hands."

"You have left me with only one wish on earth," exclaimed Mabel, earnestly, "which is, that you may share with me the happiness of my new religion."

"You forget that old gentlemen are not so easily carried off to such fairyland, Mabel," replied her father with a smile. "We are sturdy matter-of-fact after buffeting for threescore years with real life."

"My mother is there," said Mabel, softly.

Mr. Croyden took up his newspaper, and the subject was never resumed.

Early one morning, Mr. and Mrs. Severn were summoned in frantic haste to the Lodge They found Mabel pale with fear and distress kneeling by her father's bed. Mr. Croyden had been seized with apoplexy, and lay apparently dying before any one was aware of his illness.

"Speak, speak to him of Jesus," said his daughter, in anguish for his soul. "O for one hour of consciousness to learn of Christ's salvation!"

Alas! how could the pastor or the friend give comfort in a sorrow like this?

Medical assistance arrived, and all that human care could do was done, and with some success; but no hope was given of eventual recovery. Mr. and Mrs. Severn watched and prayed with Mabel for at least one opportunity to speak of Him who is "able to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by him;" but how faint the hope of a dying hour, after a life of willful alienation and rebellious pride!

But consciousness did return, and with it came overwhelming conviction of his life's mistake. The proud man was prostrated at last. He grasped Mr. Severn's hand and implored his prayers.

"My wife, my child were right," he murmured. "But where am I? There is no mercy now for me."

The free invitations of redeeming love were poured into his eager ear, until with one earnest cry for mercy, as he echoed his daughter's prayer, he became again apparently unconscious, and in a few hours breathed heavily his last.

His poor child was stunned. For a long time she neither moved nor spoke, and her kind friends gazed with anxious sympathy on her tearless face, where the agony of her heart was too plainly portrayed. Then Helen came, and Dora, too, found time to hasten to her friend again in the hour of need; and at length she tried to be comforted. That last cry! it might be answered, who could tell?

No one could tell, but no one would rob the orphan of her only ray of hope. She was not

depending for her own salvation on the presumptuous expectation of time in the dying hour to settle the momentous account; and the lesson she had now to learn was silence and submission, for "Shall not the Judge of all the earth do right?" But there was another lesson to be learned. Let those consider it who delay to time that may not be given, a subject concerning which it is written, "To-day if ye will hear his voice, harden not your hearts;' for "*now* is the accepted time, *now* is the day of salvation."

But the Comforter did not forsake his own dwelling-place when his presence was most needed there, and Mabel now knew the blessedness of his tranquilizing power. She quieted her struggling spirit in his love; she asked permission to cherish the faint hope to which her yearning affection clung; she felt the sweet sympathy of a pitying Saviour, and the Spirit of adoption whispered the tender privilege of that eternal bond by virtue of which she might still say, "Abba, Father."

CHAPTER XV.

SCARCELY SAVED.

And ye shall seek me, and find me, when ye shall search for me with all your heart.—JEREMIAH xxix, 13.

But now in Christ Jesus ye who sometime were far off are made nigh by the blood of Christ.—EPHESIANS ii, 13.

MR. LEIGHTON watched, with the deepest interest and affection, the progress of his adopted children, approving with cordial satisfaction the resolve of both, notwithstanding its interference with his own personal enjoyment. Dora was the real, though not the nominal, head of an establishment whither Christian parents thankfully sent their children to be instructed in the doctrines and principles which blend the hopes and blessings of a better world with the pursuits and practice of the present life; and some who were not decided in religion for themselves, did not object to the influence, for a time, of principles

which they believed to be productive of the purest moral training.

There were, doubtless, objectors to Dora's views, and many who thought she should have conformed to the world in several points wherein she stood firm as adamant; but these either yielded or sought elsewhere the training which better suited their ideas of human nature and the object of life. Mrs. Gresford and her daughters, satisfied with the small amount of labor required from them, were content to leave all such matters in Dora's hands, aware that, though gentle and yielding in everything that love and self-denial could grant, she would maintain against the whole world the integrity of Christian principle, and the supremacy of the word and will of God.

Very tenderly and guardedly were the melancholy circumstances of Mr. Gresford's death announced to the widow and her children; and after their total dependence on Dora's kindness and their own exertions became fully understood, they resigned themselves more calmly to

their irremediable lot; and though the voice of murmuring and discontent was not excluded from their dwelling, they restrained it more carefully from the ear of their generous friend.

And Mark Leighton, in whom, though now choosing to toil industriously for a livelihood rather than live in dependence on his uncle, and so curtailing his means of benevolence and liberality, that uncle delighted to contemplate the future owner of the Manor, was, after due preparation, invited to take the management of a respectable business for a gentleman whose health demanded long relaxation, and who was content to yield all responsibility into his hands, offering a reasonable salary for the present, with the prospect of a partnership, or ultimately the transfer of the whole, should circumstances justify the course.

"It is far from improbable, sir," said Mark, when solicited to accede to the terms, "that I may for a time injure rather than benefit your business. It is true that I have connections likely to employ me, but they are aware of my

principles, and will suffer me to act for them accordingly; but your clients may not be disposed to take my advice, and would therefore carry their causes elsewhere."

"Your principles!" said the solicitor, smiling "do I not know your principles? Have they not borne you through the cruel loss of a handsome fortune? Have they not made you struggle through difficulties, and renew close study, and live in humble lodgings, rather than diminish the means of a generous relative who spends his life and money in doing good? Do you think I don't know principle when I see it? Manage my business, I say; I have lived in it too much, and I want to think of something better, so I am resolved to trust it to God and you."

"Then if you hear complaints, and find that I cannot satisfy all who may have prejudged their own causes, you will not therefore withdraw your confidence, nor believe that I am negligent of your real interests."

"Assuredly not. I do not say that you will

not be observed, but if you are true to God, I have no fear of your diligence and care for me."

The agreement was concluded, and Mark's friendly employer devoted himself to a considerable period of recreation ere he should look into his books, or approach his desk again. The plan better suited Mr. Leighton's wishes for the future settlement of his nephew than his establishment in business for himself; and dividing his time between London, the Manor, and the school, he blessed God who had opened before him such happy sources of affection while passing on to rejoin those which had been in mysterious but unquestioned love withdrawn from his sight.

On one occasion, when journeying to Leighton, having accidentally heard of the illness of one in whom he had been considerably interested, Mr. Leighton altered his route for the purpose of inquiry. Here he was warmly welcomed, but much grieved at the change which had passed over the form and countenance of his young acquaintance, Mr. V.

"I have been ill, you see," said he, "and I believe the consequence is still doubtful. I had almost resolved to ask you to visit me, when your arrival was unexpectedly announced; so there is no doubt of your being the right person to meet my present necessities."

Lady V. having added her entreaties to those of her son, Mr. Leighton was induced to pro long his stay, and was soon installed as a member of the family.

It appeared that the invalid had been seized with an attack which threatened to terminate in consumption; but had rallied sufficiently to leave his room, and to read and converse with less effort and exhaustion. Mr. Leighton marked the anxious watchfulness of Lady V., as she eagerly entered into every wish or fancy expressed by her son; and begged him to speak freely to their friend the feelings which had lately caused him uneasiness.

"Henry has some misgivings," said she, "which I am sure you can understand and remove; but I have found myself too ignorant

to help him, further than to remind him of his superiority over many young men in his station in life, and of his perfect discharge of all the duties of a most excellent and beloved son."

How sadly fell this eulogy on the ear of the Christian man! But he perceived with satisfaction that it was rather irritating than consoling to the subject of it.

"My dear mother is partial," said he; "but before I speak of myself, I must tell you a little story of a more worthy individual."

It happened some little time previous to his illness, that Henry V. had business which required a clear head and high principle to examine into and carry through; and having decided where to apply, presented himself early one morning at the attorney's office, hoping to gain his attention before it could be engrossed by others. Finding the outer door empty, he made a right aristocratic signal at the inner door, which was speedily answered by the appearance of a youth, who requested him

to wait a few moments, when the principal would be ready to receive him. He then withdrew, and Mr. V., impelled by a feeling which he described as more powerful and significant than mere curiosity, listened anxiously to discover the subject of discussion in that inner room. He heard, and was surprised; but he listened, on for it was the language of prayer. Again the door was opened, and three youths came forth and took their places at the desk; while the visitor introduced himself and his business to the notice of their master. While doing so, his eye rested on a little book which he remarked King Pharaoh would have entitled "Zaphnath-paaneah," (Revealer of secrets, Gen. xli, 45,) and which was neither ostentatiously displayed, nor affectedly concealed as if its owner were ashamed of it, and concerning which he resolved to ask a question.

"I ought to apologize for intruding on you so very early," said he, "as you were not expecting visitors so soon. May I take the liberty of asking you if that little book assists you

to discuss and promote the interests of justice?"

"It does," said the attorney; "and from it we were preparing for the business of the day when you arrived."

"And do your clerks enter into the value of such extraordinary preparation?"

"I begin to hope so. I have no right to reserve to myself exclusively a benefit which is equally free to them; and having stated to them my own privilege, and the help it affords to myself, they are at liberty to share it with me. I wish them to know that my object in business is not merely to earn money, and to make a name in my profession, but to honor God, and to do his will; and that this elevates our duties out of the region of cold, unwilling drudgery into that of the happy obedience of affectionate children."

"And do they really understand you?" asked the visitor in unfeigned surprise.

"I am using the means, and they choose to join with me in asking God's blessing on them,"

replied the attorney. "If they come to business from Christian homes, it is to them corroborative of their 'parents' instructions and example, and upholds the influence of their home impressions, that Christianity is not merely a theological creed, but a practical reality, suitable to the regulation of every department of life and duty; and if their homes are destitute of Scripture and prayer, they have here an opportunity of learning something of the nature and value of both. I require them to listen to God's word; his Spirit only can constrain them to acceptable prayer, and it is by their own wish they unite with me in that. You seem interested, or I should not thus have entered into such particulars."

"I am really interested," replied Mr. V., "and beg to press the subject still further, and to ask if you do not find the details of business, and contact with people who not only do not hold your sentiments, but reject them with contempt, some barrier to the conscientious and consistent exercise of these principles!

And, you know, one inconsistency would do more mischief than a whole year's faultless practice would do good."

"I am aware of that; but its effect is not to drive me from the profession of my faith in Christ, but rather to humble me before him in acknowledgment of my own weakness, with more earnest prayer for that upholding 'grace' which 'is sufficient' for me. Is the false profession of the detected hypocrite to chase the true Christian from the field? Because a traitor disgraces the camp, are loyal soldiers to hide their colors? No, they are the more urgently called to manifest whose they are and whom they serve, knowing that, whatever may be the opinion of the world, God and their own consciences know the false from the true; and that the failure of a million of professors cannot excuse one honest believer in Jesus from speaking and acting out, as opportunity is afforded him, the faith and love which animate his heart and the holy allegiance by which he is actually and consciously ruled. I do not wonder that

men who stand in their own strength, and seek no higher object than their own advancement, fail before the temptations by which almost all the occupations and business of life are beset; but I believe that when the heart and mind, under the influence of God the Holy Spirit, in the exercise of the appointed means of sanctifying and conforming grace, are set for the honor and service of God, there is no lawful calling upon earth, no profession necessary to the organization and well-being of society, in which that object may not be attained, and that duty fulfilled, not perfectly, and therefore no ground of merit before God; but consistently and visibly so, enough to vindicate the motive, and to put to silence the ignorance of foolish men."

"Then," said Mr. V., "if you will not allow the world to overthrow your principles, your principles will impede your advancement in it."

"That is not my concern," said he, quietly. "I see my duty, and I have no authority to disturb myself with its results; God never yet for-

sook one who trusted and served him for Christ's sake."

"Are you not sometimes troubled with clients who would gladly be assisted to make the worse appear the better cause?" asked Mr. V

"Yes, it does sometimes occur," said the attorney; "but I always tear off the vail, and exhibit the design in the light of God's sacred truth; whereupon I either make a convert or lose my client. Then it is often my pleasant privilege to make peace among litigants, and to prevent an expensive appeal to the law, which might ruin them all."

"I hope you charge right noble fees for such an exercise of your skill," said Mr. V., laughing; "otherwise I fear you will never realize a fortune."

"My reward is in my own conscience," replied the Christian, smiling, "though I have done no more than that which is my duty. I am not aiming at the acquisition of wealth, but I find the promise fulfilled to those 'who seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness,'

that 'all other things shall be added unto them.'"

"Now, Mr. Leighton," continued the young man, having detailed the substance of this interview, "you will no longer wonder at the freedom of our conversation, and my interest in his remarks, when I tell you that this plain-speaking lawyer is my old college acquaintance, your nephew Mark."

"It is like him," said Mr. Leighton, deeply gratified and affected both at the circumstance and the evident impression it had made.

"But," remarked Mr. V., "this was not the first time I had come into contact with religion in the form of motives and principles of action, instead of the doctrines and theories of mere cold profession."

"You must not speak slightingly of doctrines, my friend," said Mr. Leighton. "We are bound to yield to doctrines which are involved in revealed facts and commands; but for theories, as you evidently use the term, I am not disposed to contend, for man need not theorize

when God has spoken. He has propounded the doctrine which, believed in, produces the practice he approves."

"Whatever the source," said Mr. V., "it is something of which I am ignorant, and by which I have never yet been influenced. Can I learn it? May I attain it? Will you help me? for, whether I am to live or to die, I can no longer rest without it."

"You rejoice my heart," said Mr. Leighton, who desired no higher honor on earth (if such there be) than that of guiding a sinner to the Saviour's feet. "Did you not say that you have been reading your Bible?"

"Yes, but I am like Candace's minister, I want 'some man' who understands and loves the subject to guide 'me.' I am not asking for a system of divinity on which to exercise my intellectual criticism; I want simply to know what saves the soul, purifies the heart, and makes the life consistent."

"Then you will not reject for its simplicity the proposition of the Gospel, which embodies

all you seek. Believe in Jesus Christ; there is no other; he is the Alpha and Omega."

"But though I am sorry for many things in which I have broken God's laws, I do not feel that deep penitence for sin, and that hatred against it, which urges criminals to fly, as it were, from the penalty of it, and imagine that only blood can atone for it. I ought to be more humbled by the view that a holy God must take of sin. I ought to repent more thoroughly."

"If by 'repent' you mean to change your mind upon the subject, to alter your view of it, the sooner you begin the better, for you are wandering leisurely round the 'city of refuge,' considering whether it is necessary to enter the open gates, while the avenger is behind you, and other escape is impossible. But if you mean repentance in the sense of sorrow for sin, I do not think the sinner really mourns for it until he contemplates the cost of his soul, in the agony and death of Him who, though he knew no sin himself, 'was made sin for us, that we might be made the righteousness of God in

him.' We are therefore taught that Jesus is exalted 'a Prince and a Saviour, to give repentance' as well as 'forgiveness of sins.'"

"Must I not then improve in character, and do something acceptable to God first?"

"Yes, 'This is the work of God, that ye believe on Him whom he hath sent.' My dear friend, there is no real religion in the heart until Jesus believed in is there, and no escape from the penalty of disobedience until, by faith, the sinner is in him."

"But it seems incredible that salvation can be so easy."

"It was made for the helpless and the lost; the Son of God struggled triumphantly through difficulties that wrung his soul with anguish, and tortured his human frame, that man might, through him, freely not merely attain, but be bidden to simply accept the blessing."

"It really seems presumptuous to think we, who have offended God, can so easily be restored to favor."

"But if God has declared that this is the

way, and that there is no other name under heaven given among men whereby they can be saved, the presumption is in disputing it; the crowning sin is in rejecting it."

"Is not the God of the Bible a Trinity of persons? Why, then, do you speak especially of Jesus?"

"Because he is 'God manifest in the flesh;' the external revelation of the Divine mind, character, attributes, and will, is all in Christ. God's love toward the sinner, as well as his abhorrence of sin, must be displayed to the eye; but that is not all; the power of those facts must be applied to the heart, and the internal revelation which makes them available is by the eternal Spirit, and proceeding from the Father and the Son, his mission is to testify of Jesus."

"Then must I do nothing? Is it all God's work?"

"You must come to Jesus, and ask for the Spirit he has promised to give."

"How must I come? What do you mean by coming?"

"How did Peter come, when sinking he cried, 'Lord, save me?' He believed that Jesus could do what he asked, and was not disappointed. How came he who knelt to him, saying, 'Lord, if thou wilt, thou canst make me clean?' How did the blind man come who cried, 'Jesus, thou son of David, have mercy on me?' You are, by nature, lost, unclean, blind. You partly feel your need. An examination of God's character and law must inevitably condemn you wholly."

"And now tell me," cried the inquirer, "will doing this discover to me the motive which rules the practice I have seen and admired? Will it enable me to imitate it?"

"It will; if you come to Jesus, renouncing every other supposed ground of confidence, and casting your soul entirely upon him for pardon, beseeching him to guide you with his Spirit, and sanctify you by his truth, you will learn the happy secret of the Christian life, which should be the devoted service of grateful love. The glory of the Triune God becomes

the first desire of the heart that enjoys fellowship with a loving Father, through the medium of a dying Saviour, by the indwelling of the Holy Spirit; and no self-denial will be thought too great, no cross too heavy, which may in any way promote that end. One breath of the Spirit of Life, awakening love to Christ, responsive of his love to you, will be a more infallible and constraining guide to the path of duty than all the moral codes you ever read or desired to follow."

"If I could but bring myself to believe this," said Mr. V.; "but there is the difficulty. It is so simple, so generous, so different from all human transactions between offenders and the offended."

"If you would but ask God for grace to believe it, my dear young friend," said Mr. Leighton, "the difficulty would disappear. It is his own prerogative to show the Father's arms opened ready, as he advances to meet his returning prodigal. At a distance the heart doubts, and fears, and trembles, lest it should presume

or mistake; but venturing all on God's veracity, ceasing from the suggestions of a depraved nature and fallen reason, it may come close to God, and there find him only love in Christ. It is, indeed, simple, and generous, and unlike human dealings; but that we might expect, in the plan of a perfectly wise and holy God."

"Who could ever have devised a plan so winning as that of vailing his glory in our manhood, and coming to be made 'acquainted with grief' for us?" said Mr. V., musingly. "It is strange, and yet too strange to be anything but true. I used to resent the constant declaration of the Gospel, that 'Christ is all,' and man nothing, in the salvation of the soul; but remove him from the breach that sin made between God and man, and what is there to grasp or to stand upon?"

"Nothing but a 'fearful looking for of judgment and fiery indignation,'" replied Mr. Leighton. "'All things are delivered unto me of my Father;' 'I am the way, the truth, and the life,' said Jesus; and whatever the sinner's case, or

the believer's circumstances, the full and sufficient supply, from the first look toward the cross, to the bestowal of the crown, is only in Christ. 'Looking unto Jesus' is the triumph of faith, and the stimulating spring of heavenward progress."

"I like this plain speaking," remarked Mr. V.; "but I have often conversed with professors of evangelical religion, who seem afraid to upset one's self-complacency, and who beat about in a timid sort of disguise of obnoxious truths, leaving one uncertain how far they really believe for themselves, and how far one is astray from the right course. But when Christ alone, Christ all-sufficient, is boldly proclaimed, there is no doubt what kind of Christianity is meant, nor where it was learned, and that we must have Bible religion or no salvation."

Thus, during many days, the great subject was freely discussed, and the Bible examined; and while the son was learning, as a little child, the way into the kingdom of heaven, his mother was listening with interest and attention to a

theme so new and strange to her worldly heart.

She had been proud of her son; she had educated him for the world, and had been gratified by the position he filled in it. But when he was taken ill, and the usual course of nature seemed likely to be reversed, when, instead of her age being soothed by his attentions, and her end mourned by her only child, she was to witness his departure, and to live on in loneliness and sorrow, then, when he asked her about God, and the soul, and the way of peace, she could not answer him; she trembled at his words. The summer of life had ended, the time of harvest had come, and the reaper was waiting; but no seed had been sown, no fruit was ready.

Then, for herself, her prop and hope was going from her, and she had no support to lean on when her reed should be broken; no portion laid up, no joy with which earthly changes cannot intermeddle when "the heart knoweth its own bitterness."

As she became more and more convinced of

the improbability of her son's recovery, and more and more anxious to understand the hope that had sprung up in his heart by the Gospel of the grace of God, she eagerly besought Dora Leighton to be her comfort and help in the hour of sorrow, and to hear from the lips of the new-born heir of glory his own witness of what Christ had done for his soul.

Dora hesitated not, but hastened to the house of mingled joy and sorrow, and, as a daughter and a sister, soothed with Christian love the aching heart of the widowed parent, and the dying hours of "the only son." Her bright and happy faith pointed on, on to the future meeting time, and the perfect likeness of the risen Jesus; and while the one smiled in joyful hope, the other eagerly listened to the truth which declares it, and sought for herself the grace which can alone originate it.

There was no such glorious light as that which transformed the dying couch of the lovely Esther into a triumphal car, conducting a conqueror to her reward; but there was well

founded hope, faith true, if not rapturous, love sincere, if not ardent. But, O, how many keen regrets and self-reproaches for having stood "all the day idle," while a neglected Lord was waiting to be gracious, and ready to employ in his vineyard all who will be lured by love to work in his service! The bitter recollections of wasted time, lost opportunities, misspent talents, often brought the dark cloud of doubt over the soul; and, though faith still clasped the cross, the trembling heart sometimes scarcely dared to look up in expectation of a welcome from Him who hung upon it. True, these were moments of the enemy's advantage; but how far better had such keen weapons been kept from his grasp!

"O that I could have time," said the dying man, "at least to prove the reality of the change I feel! I long to proclaim to others Him whom I have so long practically denied, and to manifest to the world the constraining power of the love of Christ. It is not told out in the lives of Christians as it ought to be; very rare are the

examples which, with single-hearted devotedness to God, are not ashamed to confess him before men, in the life, as well as with the lip. I believe that the worldliness or timidity of the true believer who is silent when he ought to speak, or insnared when he ought to have watched and been steadfast, is more damaging to the cause of the Gospel than the detected hypocrisy of the false professor. But, if spared, I also might fail even where I see most need of vigilance."

"It has been called," said Dora, "the choicest dealing of the Father with his child, to take him home in the first overflow of awakened love, and to plume for flight the freed wing of the spirit as it escapes safely from the snare of the fowler. No more of temptation, or sorrow, or sin, but immediate and full deliverance peace, and holiness."

"That is a sweet thought," said Mr. V.; "bu it precludes opportunity to fight and conquer in an opposing world."

"Pride might then intrude, and play the

traitor, and rob Christ of the full glory of your salvation," said Dora.

"True, we are in ourselves nothing but an incarnation of inconsistencies. Yet I should like to leave it as my dying testimony to the Church on earth, that it was to the consistency of a practical self-denying believer in Jesus that I owe the first conviction that religion is power and life, and not word and form, and that the will of God may be dearer than human praise and earthly happiness."

There was also a test of his own sincerity to which he did not venture to allude; but it was not the less honorable to God and his workmanship in Christ, that, though grace had now removed the only barrier between the new believer and the earthly happiness he had sought, yet he was nevertheless content to "depart, and to be with Christ, which is far better."

CHAPTER XVI.

FAREWELL GLIMPSES.

Then I saw that wisdom excelleth folly, as far as light excelleth darkness.—Ecclesiastes ii, 13.

She shall give to thine head an ornament of grace: a crown of glory shall she deliver to thee.—Proverbs iv, 9.

And now many years passed away, and an event occurred to the persons alluded to in this narrative which some youthful reader may shrink from contemplating. They all grew old; that is, the young advanced to middle age, the middle aged to the time when the "sear and yellow leaf" hangs lightly on the tree, ready to be wafted away on the blast commissioned to dislodge it. It may be a disagreeable subject, but truth, whether fair or wrinkled, musical or discordant, must sometimes be seen and heard.

But who grows old gracefully? Who can display a charm through the dim and sunken eye,

the faded cheek, the thin gray hair, the shrinking, weakening frame, on which time strikes the hour more punctually than a minster bell?

Not the worldly-hearted, who grudge each year that cuts off a portion for enjoyment, and shortens the lease of life; who walk in thoughtlessness among seen things, and regard not things unseen and eternal. Not the covetous, whose satisfied to-morrow never arrives, and who have always something more to gain ere the account may close. Not the fashionable beauty, who trembles at decay, and blames the bad taste of modern styles that hint at unbecoming changes. Not the student, who has always schemes of discovery, and attainments in view for which even patriarchal age were insufficient. On these old age sits awkwardly, as if it were a burden suddenly alighted on their shoulders from some unknown region whither they had been accidentally betrayed. No, it is in nothing earthly to patent an invention that can remedy the trace of time, or supply a substitute for joys "that perish with the using."

But it is the high privilege of Christianity to proclaim the heavenly recipe whereby the hoary head may become a crown of glory, and to point to "the path of the just," which is as "the shining light, that shineth brighter and brighter unto the perfect day;" wherein old age glides serenely to the gates of "the celestial city," and "to live is Christ," while "to die is gain."

If temperance, industry, benevolence, benefit the health, and reap a present reward, how much more the tranquilizing influence of peace with God, holding the passions in subjection, regulating the mental powers, and spreading the charm of contentment over the placid face, and the smile of love around the lip where "the law of kindness" dwells! Here is no melancholy caricature of life, aping what is gone, for the merry sport of more youthful folly; but here is the grace that dignifies what is, and commands the respect even of those who know not whence it springs.

The same God who watered the seed ere the

blade had sprung to light, and whose care has cherished it to maturity, still gazes with infinite complacency on the shock of corn fully ripe; and while he permits it to linger on the stem, it is only that more witnesses of its goodness may gather round, ere he reaps it in triumph for the garner of heaven.

He whose life has been an epistle of Christ and whose ever-presiding motive has been the glory of God, and he alone, grows old gracefully, and hails time as a friend, who just touches only to remind him that "the night is far spent," and "the day is at hand."

There is a small town in a pleasant district, in which stood a neat house inhabited by two sisters. They were well known to all their neighbors, who were equally appreciated in return, and their story was not forgotten. Once they were graceful girls, blooming in the world of gayety and fashion, but over their youthful prospects rolled a blighting cloud of disappointment and ruin. They had kept school for many

years after those on whom they had depended for its management had been withdrawn, but self-interest demanded the effort, and it was made.

On the death of their mother, a weak-minded and discontented woman, who had neither hope for the future nor peace in the present, because she had been afflicted and disappointed in the past, and the marriage of one younger sister with whom the other removed, they had resigned their school, and retired upon its proceeds to comfortable independence; comfortable in a pecuniary rather than a domestic sense, for the chief element of comfort was wanting. It was their privilege to hold themselves high in society; and having suffered some years of doubt and perplexity concerning the stage of life to which they might assume to belong, and symptoms of the world's estimate of their personal attractions being forced on their unwilling observation, they determined to resign pretensions to youth, and joined a select coterie, whose chief occupation consisted in making themselves

acquainted with the affairs of their neighbors, and answering the vanities and conceits of the younger members of society.

The tastes of the sisters were unfortunately somewhat diverse: one liked cats, but the other detested them; so the two pet pussies slept and purred to their utmost contentment in the lap of the one lady, and set up their backs in high indignation at the other, taking care that the door was never closed upon them with their enemy in the absence of their friend.

The sisters did not admire the same authors, nor read the same books. They kept different hours, and patronized different servants; so that the discord of the parlor was perpetuated in the kitchen. An invalid military brother from India made an effort to reside with them, but his discomfort was soon so great, through the contentions of three stubborn, unyielding wills, that he sought a home elsewhere, and lavished his affections and his money on those who had no natural claim on either.

It might be surmised that these ladies had no

object in life but to render each other unhappy, were it not that if one were ill, the other immediately became all tenderness and alarm, perhaps lest she should be left alone in an unfriendly and unappreciating world. What their object might be, if they had one, was a mystery known only to themselves. Thus Clara and Augusta Gresford wended uneasily along the course of time, cultivating the weeds of natural character, exposing themselves to abundant mortifications and annoyances, and indifferent to the realities of the eternity to which they were hastening. They did not grow old gracefully.

Helme Lodge became the scene of domestic happiness and Christian peace. Time, which is sometimes a little arbitrary in the distribution of its favors, almost obliterated from the fair face of Mabel Croyden the traces of her trying illness, and the bloom of health was heightened by the placid influence of a contented heart. Walter, in restored possession of all his intellectual powers, consecrated them in deliberate

conviction of their lawful use, to the service of the God who bestowed them; he still visited Esther's grave, and cherished the remembrance of her example and her words, and whenever his summons might come, had no doubt that he and Esther would meet again. But in the meantime, he found happy, holy duties to discharge, in assisting his venerable father in pastoral cares, and ministering, with his happy wife, to the necessities and privations of their poorer neighbors.

The mausoleum disappeared, and a new church was built; no monument to human pride, or token of idolatrous affection, but a house in which Christ crucified should be preached to sinners, and prayer and praise ascend in return, through him, to the God whose name is "love."

But there was a special birthday at the Lodge. A youthful Esther, seated by her mother's side, gazed tenderly into the sweetest countenance she had ever seen, while listening to a story. They were in a large and handsome room, fur-

nished with mahogany chests, and a wardrobe with tall mirror doors. Mabel held in her hand a Bible, and to each well-known object belonged a theme of interest to her daughter. She told of the loss of robes and jewels, and the treasured book that was left behind; of the Divine grace that had blessed its sacred truths, robed her in imperishable raiment, and adorned her with lovelier gems. Then she told, also, of vanity and its punishment, of intellect and its snare, of beauty that does not fade, and wisdom that needs no check.

Esther listened with affection and reverence, and treasured her mother the more for the humility and meekness with which she alluded to her early faults, and magnified the grace that had wrought the happy change.

"I shall never want other jewels than yours, my sweet mother," she said; "for to me you are like 'the king's daughter, all glorious within, and 'her clothing of wrought gold.' "

"Then you fulfill to me the wise woman's prophecy," was Mabel's smiling reply, "that

'Favor is deceitful, and beauty is vain: but a woman that feareth the Lord, she shall be praised.'"

In the affectionate attentions of Mabel, Mr. and Mrs. Severn were solaced for the departure of their devoted Helen, when Mr. Leighton's will, having enforced his long-cherished and ripened plans, Mark was enabled to place her by his side, as the mistress of Leighton Manor, to diffuse love, and happiness, and blessing within and around her home.

There was on the border of the shrubbery at the Manor House a remarkable cottage, which was long a scene of interest to every one who had once beheld it, and been privileged with a peep within. The flowers luxuriated around it as if it were just of their own good-will and pleasure that they did so; the roses nodded temptingly to the passer-by, and the evergreens flourished in beauty, emblematical of the inmates whose dwelling they adorned. The cottage itself wore the look of order and comfort, as if all its arrangements were under the happy

influence of well-regulated minds and cheerful hearts. The household, without any miracle of imagination or romance, dwelt in harmony and peace, bearing and forbearing with one another in love. And here, in serene and respected age, passed the closing years of Mr. Leighton's useful life. He, like his valued friends, Mr. and Mrs. Severn, bore gracefully the tokens of life's decline; and the chastening remembrance of past sorrows, without clouding the enjoyment of present blessings, pressed forward into the gilded future the bright hope of coming glory.

The friend and companion of those years was a middle-aged Christian lady, who not only fulfilled to him the fair promise of her early life, but was also the attractive center to a large circle of youthful relatives and valued friends. The young told their hopes and joys, their trials and sorrows, into her willing ear, certain of sympathy and counsel, assistance and encouragement, as the case might require. The aged, the poor, the ignorant, were the ever-readily

acknowledged claimants on her peculiar care; and while her words breathed cordials to the broken-hearted, her smile cheered the lowly lot of the peasant at his labor, and the housewife at the cottage hearth. Hers was a holy, a happy, and an honored life, and, as such, she gratefully appreciated it while passing on to the home prepared for God's people.

In appearance she was always lovely to behold; not because years had left quite untouched the once glossy hair, and blooming cheek, and sparkling eye; but because Christianity had preserved and purified the warm affections of her heart, and peace reigned in holy serenity over the temper and the will, setting its beautiful seal on her placid brow; because hope and joy kindled the animation of the soul, and love and kindness imparted music to her voice. These are the charms which survive youth, can transmit the influence of their united loveliness through the homeliest form, and adorn and dignify the physical decline; while, on the contrary, mere earth-born beauty, destitute of the sanctifying

illumination of spiritual grace, becomes a melancholy wreck on the sands of life, or a beacon of warning from a dangerous shore.

But those who knew and loved this lady best were too thoroughly satisfied with what she then was, to waste a thought on what she might ever have been. There were whispers of her past history, ever uttered with respectful sympathy, which hinted of a fortune lost, of self-denial, and devotedness to the interests of those who repaid her with ingratitude and coldness; of a friend removed, whose life might have added interest to hers: but whatever the process by which her character had been spiritualized and refined, it was one in which she had more than acquiesced, and through which the holy aim of the affectionate child was to glorify God her heavenly Father.

And though the same events may not call others through the same routine of duty, yet the same grace is needful for every sinner; the same Divine word must influence every heart, and the same object sanctify the actions of those

who would walk the narrow way that leadeth unto life, and be happy and useful, respected and beloved, like Dora Leighton.

Of such the complacent verdict of Omnipotence is written in inspired truth:

> This people have I formed for myself;
> They shall show forth my praise.—Isaiah xliii, 21.

And,

> All that see them shall acknowledge them
> That they are the seed which the Lord hath blessed.
> Isaiah lxi, 9.

THE END.